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18TH PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIVAS
8th-10th January 2025

विकसित भारत की संकल्पना में प्रवासी भारतीयों का योगदान
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Ministry of External Affairs
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MODI RALLY

PM says AAP will be ousted from Delhi

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PROTESTS GROW STRONGER

Farm outfits seek Modi's intervention to save Dallewal

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NITISH ON RJD OFFER

'Made the mistake twice, will not repeat'

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DATA POINT

Sharp fall in Madrasa enrolments

Disproportionate drops need scrutiny

OPINION » PAGE 11

DOUBLE DELIGHT

Australia wins Sydney Test, enters WTC final

SPORT » PAGE 17

Stalin offers $1-mn prize for decoding Indus Valley script

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Signs and graffiti excavated from the Mohenjo-daro site. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin announced on Sunday a $1-million prize for experts or organisations that succeeded in deciphering the scripts of the Indus Valley Civilisation for everyone to understand.

"We are not able to decipher the script of the Indus Valley Civilisation that flourished once. It remains a mystery even after 100 years. Archaeologists, Tamil computer software experts and computer experts across the world have been making efforts to decipher the script. To encourage the research, the government will offer one million dollars," Mr. Stalin said at an event in Chennai to mark the centenary of the discovery of the Indus Valley Civilisation by Sir John Marshall.

The Chief Minister also announced a ₹2-crore grant for setting up a chair in the name of noted archaeologist and epigraphist Iravatham Mahadevan to continue the research on the Indus Valley Civilisation jointly by the State Department of Archaeology and the Indus Research Centre at the Chennai-based Roja Muthiah Library.

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Ahead of PM's Paris trip, Rafale, Scorpene deals reach final leg

Modi has been invited to visit AI summit in France on February 10 and 11; government-to-government deals estimated at $10 billion likely to be placed for approval before Cabinet Committee on Security in the next couple of weeks, sources say

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

Two large defence deals between India and France are being finalised, amid expectations that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Paris in February for the Artificial Intelligence Action Summit to be hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron.

The deals, together estimated at over $10 billion, will include the purchase of 26 Rafale-M fighter jets for the Indian Navy's aircraft carriers, and three additional Scorpene-class conventional submarines. The two deals are expected to be put before the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) for approval in the next couple of weeks, sources said.

"The expectation is that PM Modi will visit Paris to attend the AI Summit and will also have a bilateral component. So both sides are working to tie up the two deals which are in the final stages of conclusion," an informed source said. This was also independently confirmed by other sources.

The French President's office has already announced that Mr. Modi has been invited for the Artificial Intelligence Summit on February 10 and 11. France says the meet will focus on actions to ensure that the global AI sector can drive beneficial outcomes.

Final stage

In response to a question at his annual press conference last month, Navy chief Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi said that both deals are in the final stage and could be completed next month. "It is just a matter of completing the formalities of the acquisition process and we expect that if not this month, next month, hopefully, this [Scorpene submarine] and the Rafale-M deal should be signed," he had said.

On the Rafale-M deal, the Navy chief had said it was "one level short of taking it to the CCS (Cabinet Committee on Security)" for clearance, which will be followed by the signing of the contract. As it is a government-to-government deal, it is expected to be implemented quickly.

The deal for three Scorpene submarines is a repeat order to the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited, which is building them in partnership with the Naval Group of France. Of the six submarines from the earlier contract, five have been inducted.

The last one, *Vagsheer*, is set to be commissioned on January 15 in Mumbai, in the presence of Mr. Modi, along with two other frontline platforms.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12

NEARBY

Chitra Santhe sees over 5 lakh visitors

BENGALURU
Kumara Krupa Road was decked up with paintings, murals, decor and more, while traffic was halted and lakhs of art lovers made a beeline to Chitra Santhe. » PAGE 3

'No mahazar in Council till details are provided'

BELAGAVI
Legislative Council Chairman Basavaraj Horatti on Sunday said that as of now he would not allow the CID to conduct a mahazar unless it provides details. » PAGE 6

EDUCATIONPLUS » PAGE 9

Four Maoists, head constable killed in gunfight in Bastar

The Hindu Bureau
KONDAGAON

The encounter began on Saturday and continued till Sunday afternoon in the Abujhmad forests

Four Maoists were killed in a gun battle with security forces that began on Saturday and continued till Sunday afternoon in the Abujhmad forests of Bastar in Chhattisgarh, the police said.

A head constable, Sannu Karam, of the District Reserve Guard (DRG) was also killed.

The security forces have reportedly seized automatic weapons such as AK47.

Major hideout

Abujhmad is a vast forested area spread across Bijapur, Dantewada and Kanker – three of the seven districts of the Bastar region – and is considered to be a major hideout of the Maoists.

Since last year, security forces have been aggressively conducting operations in the area and killed 217 Maoists.

The latest operation was undertaken by the DRG teams from Narayanpur, Dantewada, Jagdalpur, and Kondagaon, and a Special Task Force, said Sundarraj P., the Inspector-General of Police of the Bastar Range.

After the operation, the four bodies were recovered.

They were in the uniform of the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army, an armed wing of the banned Communist Party of India (Maoist), he said.

Mr. Karam's last rites were performed in the Karli Police Lines of Dantewada later on Sunday.

Expressing condolences, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai said: "His sacrifice will not go in vain; the security forces are fighting very strongly against Naxalism and this fight will continue till its end."

Data protection rules: govt. promises time for compliance

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The draft Digital Personal Data Protection Rules seek to protect citizens' rights in accordance with the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, while achieving the "right balance between regulation and innovation", said a note issued by the Union government on Sunday. Adequate time will be given to all stakeholders, from small enterprises to large corporates, for the smooth transition to achieve compliance, it added.

As provided, the Data Protection Board itself will function as a digital office and will be "born digital", with a digital platform and app to enable citizens to approach it digitally and have their complaints adjudicated without their physical presence, it said.

People can share their feedback on the draft rules through the MyGov portal at the link https://innovateindia.mygov.in/dpdp-rules-2025 till February 18. An official said there would be a structured interaction for feedback.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12

It is a 60% commission govt., alleges HDK

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

Launching an attack on the Congress government, Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy said here on Sunday alleged that payment of commission for release of funds to government contracts had crossed 60 per cent in the State.

This triggered an angry response from Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who urged the Opposition to desist from making baseless allegations. Any allegation should be supported by evidence, the Chief Minister insisted.

FULL REPORT ON
» PAGE 6

Quarantine animals with bird flu symptoms, Centre tells States after tiger, leopard deaths

A.M. Jigeesh
NEW DELHI

Infection alert: Avian influenza has been found in cattle and goats, as well as in wild species, particularly tigers. A.M. FARUQUI

With Maharashtra reporting India's first case of avian influenza among animals, the Union Animal Husbandry Ministry sent a circular to all States on Sunday, urging them to quarantine infected or symptomatic tigers and other feline species to prevent transmission to humans and other animals.

Three tigers and one leopard died of the H5N1 virus, better known as bird flu, at an animal rescue centre in Nagpur in the last week of December.

Avian influenza is crossing the species barrier, Union Animal Husbandry Commissioner Abhijit Mitra told *The Hindu* on Sunday. Citing cases in the U.S. and Vietnam, he said that avian influenza has been found in cattle and goats, as well as in wild species, particularly tigers.

Cause of infection

"In Maharashtra, the case was reported from a rescue centre and after post-mortem, the samples were sent to the Indian Council of Agricultural Research's National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases at Bhopal. There, the samples tested positive for avian influenza," Dr. Mitra said, noting that this is the first time that bird flu has been reported among animals in India. "They are precious animals. We have isolated them and are treating them. The National Joint Outbreak Response Team has reached there and is implementing the steps to be taken in such a scenario," he said, adding that the Ministry will issue detailed guidelines on the matter within a week.

The Ministry is also examining the reasons for the infection.

"The animals are in a rescue centre. Maybe the chicken served to them could be the reason for the disease. We are examining it and have alerted the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change too," Dr. Mitra said, adding that there is no need to panic at present. "The human beings who came in touch with the animals during the treatment and the post-mortem are also being screened," he said.

Biosecurity protocols

In its circular, the Ministry directed that any affected establishment will have to be temporarily shut to the public and initiate enhanced biosecurity protocols. "Restrict the movement of personnel, veterinarians, and labourers. Under no circumstances should they move from infected pens to healthy pens," the directive said.

It also directed the States to strengthen biosecurity and carry out thorough disinfection in the entire area where deaths have been reported.

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The way the league is set up this time around is more sustainable

A 10-year contract with the Hockey India League is brilliant for the future — for domestic players, young talents, international players and the companies themselves

INTERVIEW

DAVID HARTE

Uthra Ganesan
ROURKELA

He has been around long enough for David Harte to call himself the 'elder statesman' of Irish and world hockey. A trailblazer in more ways than one, Harte not only helped Ireland qualify for the Olympics for the first in more than a century but also paved the way for others to step out and seek professional success in leagues around the world. A two-time FIH Goalkeeper of the Year, Harte spoke in detail about what the Hockey India League means, the secret to Craig Fulton's success and future plans:

How's it been so far coming back for the Hockey India League?

I think it's been a fabulous experience so far. I had seen a lot of other cities in India but never been to Chennai so it was great to experience a new city. And it was nice to meet the group. Also, it's away from here, the hive of activity, so we could really focus on ourselves.

You're one of the very few who was here during the previous edition of the HIL. That makes you a senior, not just with the Tamil Nadu team but overall in the league itself. What difference do you see from then to now?

I have a feeling that everything – the way the league is set up this time around – is more sustainable. The purse that was there for the players, while it was less, it's more manageable, especially for the franchises if they're going to commit to a 10-year period. And a 10-year contract with the Hockey India League is brilliant for the future – for domestic players, young talents, international players, the companies themselves. Also small things like not as much travel with home and away format that used to take a toll on players. From an athletes' welfare perspective, we're better prepared here. Those would be the two most obvious changes and I think they're definitely for the better.

Most of the players in the HIL this time around, both Indian and foreign, are new to the experience. What would you tell them? Because this is not the usual league format the way it is in Europe.

Two things. One, have patience because it's starting again, there's always going to be some teething problems but from what I've seen, this stay is very comfortable. I think people recognise that there's going to be some things that may go slightly wrong, there may be some mistakes, whether logistically or other things. All those things you have to be patient with.

Secondly and more importantly, enjoy it because there are many moments you have in your hockey career that you can look back on. And for me this is definitely one. The fact that you get to play in the world's largest hockey stadium, it's actually amazing when it's full and the atmosphere there. It's my first time, I have never played here before, super impressive.

The time I spent earlier in India, I still have the same feeling. When I stood on that pitch for the first game against Soorma HC, I was just looking around, taking it all in, thinking how lucky and how blessed we are to be able to experience it all. So I think the players should have some patience but also enjoy every minute of it.

A lot of people wanted the HIL to come back but there were also questions whether it would be sustainable. What do you feel and how would you explain this to those who did not come this time and why they should?

I think it depends on how you are as a person, as an athlete, where exactly you are in your career. People are going to be in different phases of their life. For me, as you mentioned, being more the elder statesman, with two small girls at home, it was an incredibly difficult decision to leave, specially for Christmas. But financially, it was definitely beneficial for us and for our future.

Then there's other people who perhaps felt the money wasn't what they felt they deserved. That's a very personal perspective on what they feel they should earn. Again, I was the cheapest foreign player in my very first year in the HIL back in 2014 (for $11,000 by Mumbai) but I was coming over for the life experience. I was going to try and see if I could put my name out there to be picked up again.

And not just the local talent and the Indian juniors, it goes the same for the talented overseas players. If you can manage yourself over here, you can find yourself in any league in the world (he was the most expensive goalkeeper at $65,000 by the time the league was called off in 2017).

But I also found that as time went on, you got to know the team more, the fan base in Mumbai was incredible. And most people, when they're enjoying things, will perform to their best ability. That's what I found in those last two seasons in the HIL.

One thing that you fondly look back at from back then – maybe players you became friends with, an experience that has stayed with you?

I think it was quite special that, in that first season all those years ago, I was on the same team with Sreejesh, much before he shot to where he is now with his stardom and fame and the level of goalkeeping he has reached these last few years. P.R. Sreejesh back in 2014 wasn't the same he is 10 years later. I saw him a couple of days ago in the stadium, we reconnected and had a little bit of fun and joke about those times.

The same goes for (Krishan) Pathak. I played with him also in Mumbai and I told him back then, he was still a junior at that time, that he has the potential to be one of India's next goalkeepers. It was not to boost his ego but because of what I saw of his ability, his skill set, his hard work and dedication. You've seen that now, he was pushing Sreejesh the whole way for selection towards the Olympics and now he's going to have his time.

Also the other side of the HIL is the fans. When you had a local fan base, you had the same guys coming to most of the matches, you could really engage with them, you know, not just to click a selfie or something but also share some of your kits and that made it extra special. You were seen as Mumbai family even as foreigners. That's something you do miss this time around.

You've been a trailblazer for Irish hockey – you helped them qualify for the 2016 Olympics for the first time in 108 years, you were the first Irish player to move out and play professionally in the ultra-competitive Dutch league, the first Irish player to come to HIL. How much has Irish hockey changed from then to now?

Thankfully, the professionalism has increased, the support and finances and sponsorship that we have now allowed us to compete in the Pro League last year and again this season and helped massively in our preparation for the Paris Olympics. If I'm being honest, where Ireland needs to get to and where we need to go as an organisation, the men's and women's teams need to be at those major events consistently.

It can't be just one four-year cycle and then you miss out the next. I'm not saying you need to go and be on the podium like Australia or Belgium or the Netherlands but you need to be in that top 8-10 teams in world hockey consistently and we're taking the right steps. The better results you get, the more likely you're going to receive the funding.

I think there are things we can replicate from the women's team, of course, what they've done. We potentially had our golden era between 2015-2018. We had a historic bronze at the European Championships, qualified for the Olympic Games, qualified for the World Cup and then unfortunately went a bit downhill and it just happened to be at the same time as the women won that historic World Cup silver in 2018.

You could see straight away they benefited with sponsors coming in. It's amazing how, if you have that little bit more resources behind you, you can create and build a programme that allows and enables and empowers your team to compete with the best.

How do you see goalkeeping itself change from when you started to now?

I think the way the game is going, goalkeepers now need to be a lot more mobile and agile specially with the importance of a shootout. Those eight seconds you need to be in positions that are uncomfortable, often not within your normal range. So you need to be quicker than ever. But I think height wise, everyone's going to play to their strengths. Regardless if you're 6'5" like me or maybe 5'8" like Pathak.

He does incredibly well for what he has. I would like to say that I use my strengths in having longer limbs, people might view that in a different way. If you take more of the goal space, maybe you're a bit more of a presence on the pitch and give a bit more confidence because you're that presence behind. But I wouldn't see it as a disadvantage whatsoever because you've clearly seen over the tournaments that Pathak has excelled. Maybe you just need to play the game slightly differently.

Craig Fulton was your coach when you guys qualified for the Olympics, now he's won an Olympic medal with India. What would you say about Fulton as a coach and as a person?

I think success follows him everywhere! A key ingredient for that is he is hockey mad and obsessed and has always been from when I first met him, as my club coach in 2006. We had a *Skype* call with him and the CEO of of Hockey Ireland when he was in South Africa in 2014 to be the men's head coach and he left everything behind to come. Too bad Belgium recognised his qualities and took him away but the guy deserves to be on the biggest stage in the world. I owe an awful lot to him for what he did on a personal and national level.

I've had a lot of coaches in different leagues and teams and not every coach has the full package – tactically and technically strong but also the personal side of things, the softer skills, the interaction and communication with players, and for me he ticks all the boxes.

At 36, what next for David Harte?

I have short term goals. Right now is to try and do my best here for the Tamil Nadu Dragons, then return to my club SV Kampong to try and retain our Dutch title we won in May. With regards to the Irish team, I had a call with the Irish coach and the goalkeeper coach towards the end of November to say I wasn't available for the Pro League in Argentina and won't be available for the Pro League here unfortunately.

It's just too much time away from family and I'm also working now since the end of August with the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences (he has a degree in physiotherapy). They have been incredibly supportive to facilitate my dream of playing here.

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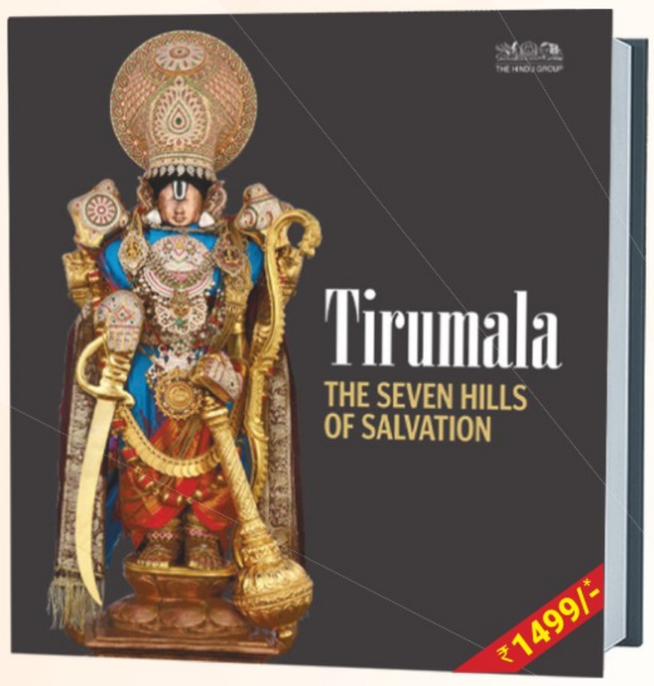

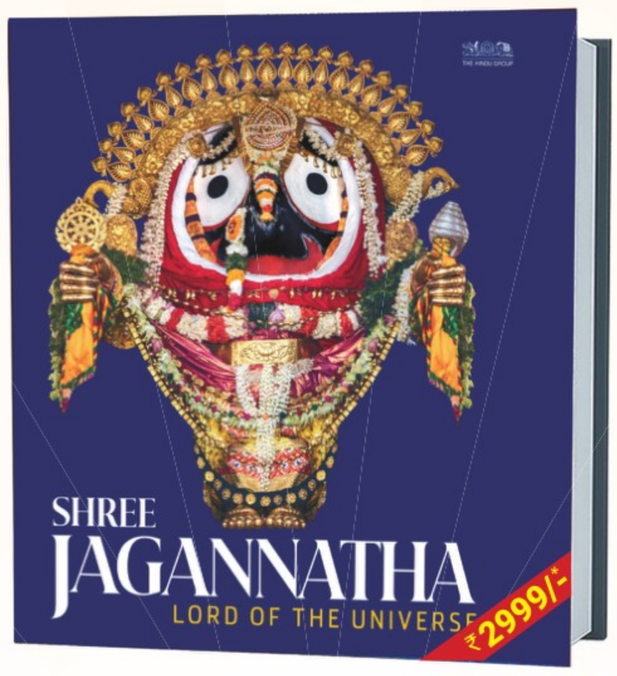

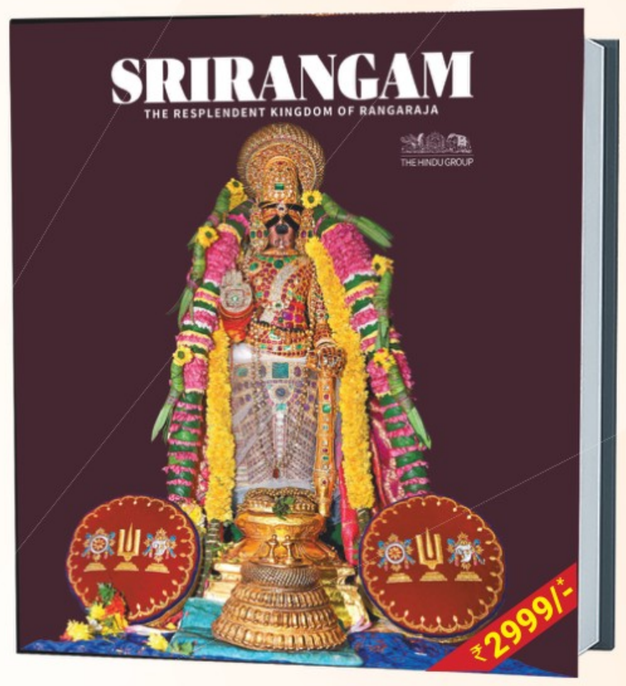

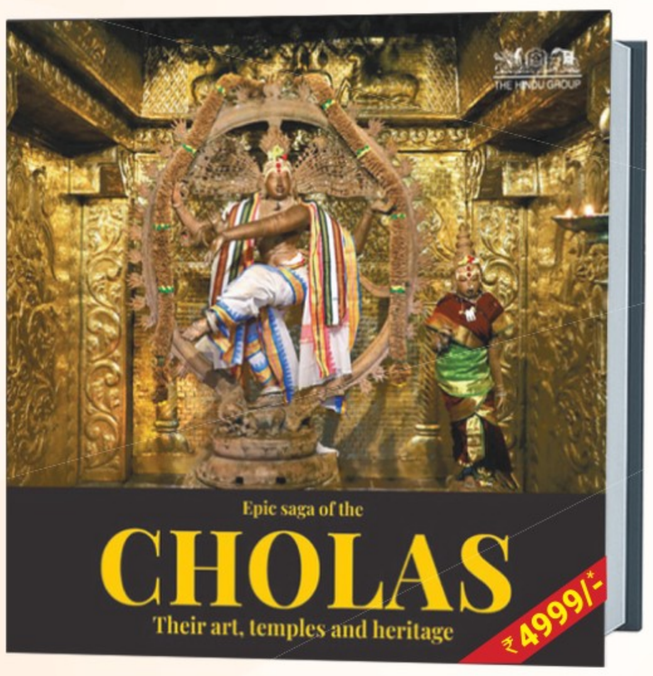

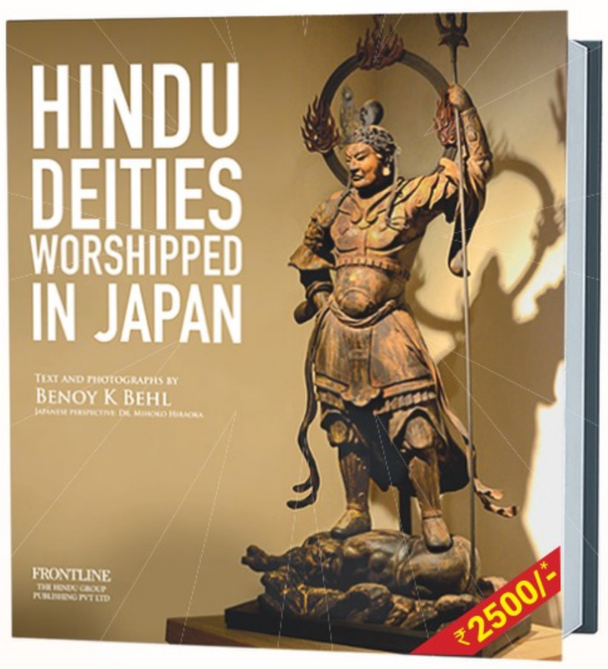

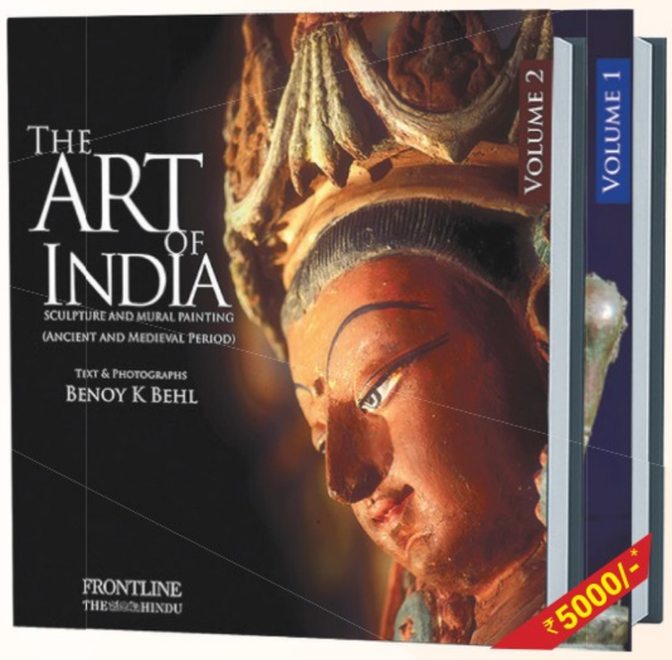

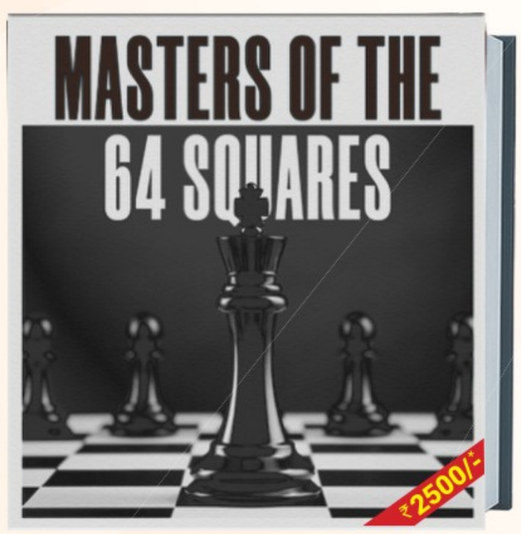

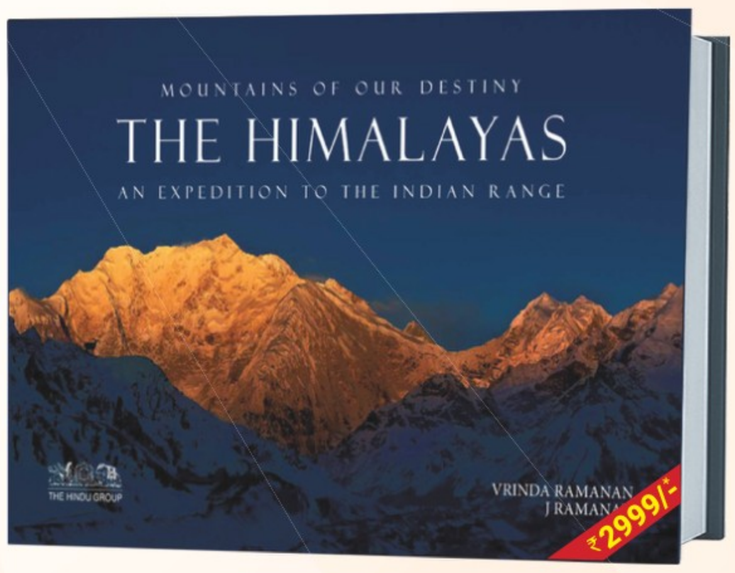

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Moving away from coal a must: South African court upholds 'Cancel Coal' case

The court ruled the energy minister and the national energy regulator couldn't provide enough evidence to show that the ill effects of coal power on the environment and the health of the people, especially children, had been considered, suggesting they didn't 'comply with their constitutional obligations'

Priyali Prakash

Civil society organisations claimed a landmark victory against fossil fuel power in South Africa on December 4 when the High Court in Pretoria turned down the national government's plan to add more coal-fired power stations to the country's power grid. According to the court, the government's plan was "inconsistent with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa" and thus unlawful.

The 'Cancel Coal' case

In its Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), the government of South Africa announced in October 2019 that it plans to add 1,500 MW of coal power to the country's national grid - 750 MW by 2023 and another 750 MW by 2027.

The Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy and the National Energy Regulator of South Africa in 2020 backed the announcement.

In 2021, youth-led civil organisations including the African Climate Alliance, the Vukani Environmental Justice Movement in Action, and the Groundwork Trust, represented by the Centre for Environmental Rights, brought the case against the government's plan. The group alleged that the plan would harm the environment and cause health issues, especially among children. The case soon acquired the popular monicker "Cancel Coal."

South Africa's energy mix

Like most economically developing nations, South Africa is heavily dependent on coal for its energy needs.

According to estimates by the International Energy Agency, almost 71% of the country's total energy supply came from coal power in 2022.

According to an analysis of global emissions through history by Climate Watch, South Africa is the world's 16th largest emitter of greenhouse gases.

South Africa has ratified the Paris Agreement, which means it is legally bound to cut its greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to mitigating global warming.

According to the Nationally Determined Contributions South Africa submitted in 2021, the country plans to cut 350-420 million tonnes of carbon-dioxide-equivalent ($MtCO_2e$) of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. It has also committed to reaching net-zero by 2050.

In July 2024, the country's President Cyril Ramaphosa signed the Climate Change Act into law, which includes a clause to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Cancel Coal protests in South Africa. GROUNDWORK

Details of the judgement

Civil society organisations contended that the government's plan to add more coal power didn't consider the rights of children as granted by the Constitution of South Africa.

According to the Constitution, South African citizens have the right "to have the environment protected, for the benefit of present and future generations." This is to be ensured through measures that "prevent pollution and ecological degradation, promote conservation, secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development."

The court ruled that the Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy and the National Energy Regulator couldn't provide enough evidence to show that the ill effects of the coal power on the environment and the health of the people, especially children, had been considered, suggesting they didn't "comply with their constitutional obligations."

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Ritwick Dutta, environmental justice lawyer and associate at Doughty Street Chambers U.K., said the order is a significant development in the field of climate litigation.

"Although, at the core, the judgment still follows the basic principles of administrative law – duty to give reasons and non-application of mind to relevant consideration – what is however

South Africa is heavily dependent on coal for energy. Almost 71% of the country's total energy supply came from coal in 2022. According to an analysis by Climate Watch, South Africa is the world's 16th largest emitter of greenhouse gases

significant is the fact that the court held that the minister, while according approval, did not take into account the interest of the future generations or the unborn generations."

He also highlighted the fact that "since the Court relied on Section 28 of the South African Constitution, which requires the state to protect the child against 'neglect and degradation' to hold that the governments/minsters decision was not in the 'best interest of the child'. The implication of this judgment as I see it is the requirement that a minister/government decision must not be based on the immediate short-term need but must consider a long-term holistic view," Mr. Dutta said.

A 2019 study published in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* reviewed epidemiological literature to understand the impact of coal-fired power plant emissions on children's health. It concluded that they affect children negatively due to their "developing physiology, anatomy, metabolism, and health behaviours." The review also observed that children who lived near a coal-fired plant exhibited more asthma and respiratory-related conditions.

Environmental justice

The case is also an example of environmental justice in the context of transitioning away from coal worldwide.

"Even in India, for the first time three ministries – Ministry of Power, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy – jointly filed an affidavit before the Supreme Court in the case of *M.K Ranjitsingh versus Union of India* that India will have to move from polluting coal to wind and solar not only to ensure cleaner air but also to meet its commitment under the Paris Agreement," Mr. Dutta said. "Coal will continue to meet the energy requirement in the short run, but it is now accepted that transition is a must if the world has to slow down climate change. The fact that courts globally are recognising this reality is ... only natural."

The lawyer also said that even though this case is limited to coal power, combating climate crisis goes beyond it. "Judicial decisions on climate change are a recognition of both the urgency to deal with climate crisis and the fact that civil society groups and citizens have an important role to play in tackling the crisis. It should not be forgotten that the South African judgement is an outcome of litigation undertaken by three civil society groups. It is therefore crucial that the state and the judiciary are more open and receptive towards divergent views on dealing with a crisis of an unparalleled nature," he added.

THE GIST

In 2021, civil organisations represented by the Centre for Environmental Rights sued the government over plans to start more coal fired plants

South Africa has ratified the Paris Agreement, which means it is legally bound to cut its emissions. It plans to cut 350-420 million tonnes by 2030. In 2024 President Ramaphosa also signed the Climate Change Act into law

A 2019 study concluded that children's physiology, anatomy, and metabolism were negatively affected by plant emissions. The review observed that children who lived near a coal-fired plant exhibited more asthma and respiratory-related conditions

BIG SHOT

This handout image received on December 26, 2024, from the State Control Centre of the Victoria Emergency Services shows a bushfire in the Grampians National Park in Australia's Victoria state. The country's southeast is sweltering in a heatwave that has raised the risk of bushfires. The nation's weather forecaster said temperatures would be up to 14 degrees C above average in some areas. AFP

WHAT IS IT?

Dinosaur highway: where dinos walked

Vasudevan Mukunth

limestone quarry in Oxfordshire in the UK has come to be called a "dinosaur highway" for the number of footprints of the long-lost giants scientists have discovered there.

In 1997, workers at the Dewars Farm Quarry revealed more than two score dinosaur footprints, some of them extending for more than 180 metres. Further studies revealed the footprints were from the Jurassic period.

Recently, on January 4, a team of more than a hundred scientists from the University of Birmingham and the University of Oxford announced the discovery of more than 200 footprints in the same quarry. In June last year, a quarry worker had stumbled upon "unusual bumps," as he called them, when he was digging for clay. After he reported them, the scientists got together and found that the footprints were from 166 million years ago — the Middle Jurassic period.

The team found five trackways — or series of footprints — in all. They said

An artist's impression of sauropod dinosaurs on the Isle of Skye in this undated handout photo provided by the University of Edinburgh, December 2015. REUTERS

four were created by sauropods (long-necked herbivores) called cetiosaurus and one by a carnivore called megalosaurus. Analysis by the team suggested all the animals had been walking, not running, at the (possibly different) times the prints were made.

The megalosaurus footprint is particularly serendipitous because 2024 was the 100th year of its study. In 1824, a megalosaurus fossil became the first dinosaur fossil to be unearthed and examined in detail by the British theologian and geologist William Buckland.

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Chitra Santhe sees over 5 lakh visitors

Around 1,500 artists from 20 States displayed and sold their works at the annual arts festival organised by the Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath

A range of traditional, modern, and contemporary artworks and handicrafts were available at Chitra Santhe 2025 on Kumara Krupa Road in Bengaluru on Sunday. K. MURALI KUMAR

Yemen S.
BENGALURU

(Clockwise) Paintings on display on the day; a woman getting her face painted at one of the stalls; a person in a costume attracted attention at the fair. K. MURALI KUMAR

Kumara Krupa Road was decked up with paintings, murals, decor and more, while traffic was halted and lakhs of art appreciators made a beeline to Chitra Santhe, the annual arts festival organised by the Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath (CKP), in Bengaluru on Sunday. Around 1,500 artists from 20 states displayed and sold their works at the festival, that is estimated to have witnessed footfall of over 5 lakh this time.

Flagging off the event, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah emphasised on the importance of appreciating artists. "Just as we spend money on various things, we should also invest in artwork for our homes," he said.

Traditional paintings in Mysore and Tanjore, Rajasthani and Madhubani styles, and various other traditional, modern, and contemporary artworks were available at the santhe. What caught the attention of many were stalls put up by senior citizens and the one by Nirashritha-ra Parihara Kendra (NPK) hand-printed selling frames of the Preamble to the Constitution. Other attractions included many pottery works, caricatures, photo booths, temporary tattoos for children and adults, face painting, pencil carvings, jewellery, handicrafts, food stalls and more.

Vidya P., an artist selling frames of handmade paintings in different styles at a stall, said that she was selling most of her art at low costs and that the sales have been average this year. "I try not to increase the price to more than what the art lover quotes because they see art very differently from the artists. At the end of the day, our art is being appreciated and that is all we need," she said.

"We hardly know artists around us. It is easy to identify a popular actor or singer, but not a popular artist. There are thousands of artists here who deserve more recognition. We need festivals or fairs like Chitra Santhe to be more popularised, for such well deserving artists," Arpita Rajpurohit, a visitor, said.

Meanwhile, Chitra Samman awards were also bestowed on senior artists from Karnataka including A. Ramakrishnappa, M.S. Murthy, G.L. Bhatt. Nirmala Kumari C.S., and Surya Prakash Gowda on Saturday.

Student found dead on IIMB campus

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 28-year-old postgraduate student at Indian Institute of Management, Bengaluru, (IIMB) was found dead on campus on Saturda, which was also his birthday.

The deceased, identified as Nilay Kailashbhai Patel, from Gujarat, is suspected to have died after he fell from the third floor of his hostel accommodation on campus. He was pursuing a PG diploma in business administration and was staying at the hostel on campus since 2023.

According to the police, Nilay was celebrating his birthday on Saturday and had gone out of the campus to party with his friends. He returned and was visiting his friend's room, when the incident occurred. He reportedly lost his balance and slipped from the third floor of the hostel building. The security guard noticed him lying on the ground in a pool of blood and alerted the administration, who shifted him to the hospital where he succumbed to his injuries.

The MICO Layout Police have filed an Unnatural Death Report (UDR) and are waiting for Nilay's parents to reach the city and lodge a formal complaint, based on which further action will be taken, an official said.

In a statement on Sunday, IIMB said: "A bright student and a much loved friend to many, Nilay will be sorely missed by the entire IIMB family".

Man beaten to death in Kolar

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A man was beaten to death by a family of four for trying to create a ruckus in front of a girl's house with a marriage proposal in Gulpete in Kolar on Saturday.

The deceased, Usman, 28, owned a gym in Kolar, and had been married for five years. His wife was admitted to a hospital for kidney-related ailments and was under treatment.

Usman fell in love with his distant relative who worked in a private firm in Bengaluru and was proposing to marry her. His wife had even filed a complaint against Usman accusing him of having an affair and stayed away from him. But Usman continued to stalk the girl and tried to woo her and her family. The family of the girl had refused his proposal, since they knew he was married.

On Saturday, Usman went to the girl's house and created a ruckus demanding that the family allow him to marry her. Enraged by the embarrassment, the family members attacked Usman and allegedly beat him to death. Passersby took Usman, who was found lying unconscious on the road, to a nearby hospital where he was declared 'brought dead'. The Gulpete police have registered a case of murder and detained four people from the family of the girl for further investigations.

Inebriated youth kills mother, ends life

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A woman was strangled to death by her son, who was in an inebriated state, over a fight at their house in Old Chandapura on the outskirts of the city. The son is suspected to have ended his life on Saturday night. The incident came to light on Sunday morning.

The deceased have been identified as Mahalakshmi, 41, and her son Ramesh, 21.

Daily wage labourers
According to the police, the family hailed from Chikkahalli in Challekere taluk of Chitradurga district.

They had come to city a few years ago in search of jobs, and were working as daily wage labourers and living in a rented house.

Strangled
According to the police, Ramesh was a chronic alcoholic, used to come home drunk and fight with his mother frequently. On Saturday night too, they fought and Ramesh strangled Mahalakshmi to death using a mobile charger wire. He later realised she had died and ended his life as well.

The incident came to light on Sunday when neighbours noticed Mahalaskhmi did not come out of the house and went to check on her. They alerted the police who rushed to the spot and shifted the bodies to a private hospital in Attibele for a post-mortem.

(Those having suicidal tendencies can call Arogya Sahayavani Ph. no. 104 for help)

Police to introduce braille emergency cards to help visually impaired

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Bengaluru City Police are all set to introduce braille emergency cards for the visually impaired, on the occasion of World Braille Day, that is observed on January 4 every year.

These cards have crucial contact information such as police, fire, ambulance and women helpline numbers, including emergency response lines like 112 and 1930, apart from other essential contacts, which will come handy in any situation of distress to seek help.

The cards, printed in collaboration with the National Federation of Braille specialising in Braille production, will be distributed across the city's schools for the visually impaired, rehabilitation centers and through community outreach programmes. The federation will also organise a workshop to sensitise police personnel at the station level to the needs of the visually challenged.

Sign language
It may be recalled that the city police had recently trained first responders, who usually are staffers at the receptions in police stations, in sign language, to help them communicate with persons with disabilities.

City Police Commissioner B. Dayananda said that the idea behind this initiative was to ensure inclusivity and enhance accessibility to all. "The visually impaired often face additional challenges in seeking help during emergencies. These braille cards are designed to ensure that they have immediate access to critical resources, empowering them to seek assistance when needed. We are committed to ensure no one feels left out or vulnerable in emergencies," he said.

Mudigere Ramesh, Convenor, Karnataka Liberation Forum for the Blind, said that the initiative was a welcome move. "Many times during a situation of distress, we often forget emergency response numbers. These braille cards will come in handy at such times," he said.

Opposition to textbook mandate

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

A private schools' organisation in Karnataka has struck a dissenting note concerning the Department of School Education and Literacy's (DSEL) mandate that all State-board schools have to place indents for textbooks from the Karnataka Textbook Society (KTBS) by January 10.

The Organisation for Unaided Recognised Schools (OUR Schools) has petitioned the Commissioner for Public Instruction arguing that compelling unaided schools to adopt government textbooks restricts their right to choose resources that best suit their educational philosophy.

"It is against the principles of educational autonomy guaranteed by the Constitution," the petition said. "Private publishers often provide textbooks with updated content, enhanced pedagogy, and supplementary learning materials. Restricting schools to government textbooks could limit the quality of education and stifle innovation in teaching."

Therefore, the organisation has urged the DSEL to allow unaided State-board schools the freedom to choose textbooks that align with their teaching methods and educational goals.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, N. Prabhakar Urs, general secretary of the organiation, said, "Every year there is a big delay in the supply of textbooks. Even three to four months after schools restart, we usually do not have textbooks. Moreover, if we do not prescribe private textbooks, admissions drop. This is a reality. So why mandate us to buy these textbooks from KTBS," he asked.

Warning issued
However, K.V. Trilokchandra, Commissioner of Public Instruction, warned of stringent legal action against those who violate norms.

"As per the rules, it is mandatory for all government, aided, and unaided educational institutions of the State curriculum to purchase textbooks from KTBS. If schools do not purchase State curriculum books and teach them, but follow other curricula, legal action will be taken against such schools," he said.

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Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Number of fatalities in the Coast Guard chopper crash

3 Three crew members were killed after a helicopter of the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) crashed during landing at the Porbandar airport in Gujarat on Sunday afternoon, police said. The incident took place at 12.10 pm, Porbandar Superintendent of Police Bhagirathsinh Jadeja said. PTI

Chickens culled in Japan due to a bird flu outbreak

50,000 These birds were culled by Japanese authorities after a bird flu outbreak at a farm in the northern Iwate region. It is the 19th bird flu outbreak of the season in Japan, the agriculture ministry said. AFP

Number of Myanmar migrants turned away by Malaysia

300 Malaysia's coast guard escorted away from its waters two boats carrying almost 300 undocumented Myanmar migrants found in a state of exhaustion from lack of food and water. The coast guard did not say if the migrants were Rohingya people. REUTERS

Instant loan limit for the MSME sector by Punjab & Sind Bank

25 In ₹ lakh. State-owned Punjab & Sind Bank plans to launch an instant loan scheme up to ₹25 lakh for the MSME sector as part of its initiative to push credit through its digital platform. The bank has introduced digital home loan schemes under which approval is given within 15 minutes. PTI

The increase in Karnataka public transport bus fares

15 In per cent. Union Minister H. D. Kumaraswamy accused the Congress government of finding ways to discontinue its flagship guarantee schemes, while "burdening" people with increased costs such as the recent 15% hike in public transport bus fares. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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Implications of China's mega-dam project

Do all riparian countries have major water infrastructure projects planned in the river basin of the Brahmaputra? What are China's and India's plans and how will they affect communities living alongside the river basin? How important are Tibet's river systems to the Himalayan bioregion?

EXPLAINER

Mirza Zulfiqur Rahman

The story so far:

The ambitious plan to build a mega-hydropower dam across the Brahmaputra at the Great Bend region of the Medog county in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) in China, has been in the drawing boards of Chinese hydrocracy for decades. The clearest signalling to this effect happened in 2020 when this project was included in China's 14th Five-Year Plan. Its approval was granted on December 25, 2024. India, Bhutan and Bangladesh will have serious downstream implications of this 60 GW hyper-dam built upstream by China.

Where is this project?

The Brahmaputra is a transboundary Himalayan river basin spanning four riparian countries. China is the uppermost riparian nation with the river system originating in the TAR, where it is known as the Yarlung Zangbo (or Tsangpo). India and Bhutan are lower riparian nations in relation to China and middle riparian countries in relation to Bangladesh. It is from Bangladesh, which is the lowermost riparian nation, that the river drains into the Bay of Bengal. All riparian countries have major water infrastructure projects planned in the river basin, such as hydropower dams, embankments meant for river control, irrigation dams and barrages.

Is the Brahmaputra river basin trapped within nation-states?

Transboundary river systems are often likened by nation-states to 'taps', which they think can be closed or opened through hydraulic interventions such as dams within their respective nation-states. The Brahmaputra river system has been the site of planned and ongoing mega-dams projects by China, India and Bhutan, all contributing to an intense geopolitical power projection in the river basin. Mega-dams on rivers systems are seen as important sovereignty markers; symbols of nation-state control over natural features. Highly dramatised terms such as 'water wars' are part of the geopolitical vocabulary and upstream hydropower dams are viewed as 'water bombs' by lower riparian nations, as in the case of the Medog dam project. China sits pretty at the top of Asia's water tower, with complete control over Tibet's rivers and significant material, technological and discursive capabilities to deploy unilateral hydropower development.

The Chinese hydrocracy has gone forward with mega-hydropower developments such as the Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze river and the Zangmu Dam on the Yarlung Zangbo, commissioned in 2015, with its top political leadership firmly backing these interventions as state symbols.

What are the risks for communities inhabiting the Brahmaputra river basin?

The communities living along the river system have adapted as the river has shaped and shifted over centuries. However, with interventions such as mega-hydropower dams by China, India and Bhutan, communities cannot use their traditional knowledge about the river system meaningfully, as the pace and occurrence of disasters have magnified. The upstream communities in Tibet as well as the downstream communities in India, Bhutan and Bangladesh have to live under the shadow of mega-hydropower dams with adverse consequences to their traditional lands and livelihood. The perennial flow of the Brahmaputra in downstream areas in India and Bangladesh depends on the flow of the Yarlung Zangbo. The blocking of that perennial flow, in order to maintain headwaters to operate a mega-hydropower dam of the magnitude that China is planning at the Great Bend, will have catastrophic consequences on surface water levels, and to overall monsoon patterns and groundwater systems of the river basin. This will affect downstream agrarian communities and the sensitive ecology of the overall Himalayan bioregion/ecoregion.

What explains the hydropower dam-building race in the Brahmaputra river basin?

There is a face-off between China and India on the Yarlung Zangbo-Brahmaputra river course. China has announced the biggest hydropower project at the Great Bend while India has announced its largest dam project, at Upper Siang. Bhutan has been planning and building several medium to small dams, which have raised concerns in downstream India and Bangladesh. None of the riparian countries of the Brahmaputra river basin have signed the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses of 2014, and hence first user-rights on river systems are non-enforceable. China and India have an Expert Level Mechanism (ELM) since 2006, to discuss outstanding issues and share hydrological data, but do not have a comprehensive bilateral treaty to govern shared transboundary rivers. The outstanding land boundary dispute between China and India is weaved into the intense securitisation of the Brahmaputra river basin, which makes it an active site for strategic posturing by both countries.

A bioregional/ecoregional frame of protecting the Himalayas may help desecuritise Brahmaputra river basin.

What next?

A recent academic book by some Australian researchers titled *Rivers of the Asian Highlands: from Deep Time to the Climate Crisis*, puts forward important deep time (deep time means geological time; billions of years) perspectives to Himalayan river systems. The book juxtaposes a wider planetary thinking to emerge against the backdrop of narrow technocratic decision-making to build mega-dams within nation-states.

Tibet's river systems are important to the Earth's cryosphere, comprising permafrost and glaciers, and major climate systems directing climate and precipitation pathways such as the monsoon. Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) have increased in the Himalayas with climate change events, exemplified by the Chungthang Dam collapse in Sikkim during October 2023, which caused widespread devastation to life and property to downstream communities. The dams across the Himalayas aim at territorialising river systems, breaking their natural life cycles. This affects agro-pastoral communities, biodiversity, living biota in rivers and wetland systems. The Brahmaputra river basin will turn into an active risk-scape if all these planned dams are built eventually.

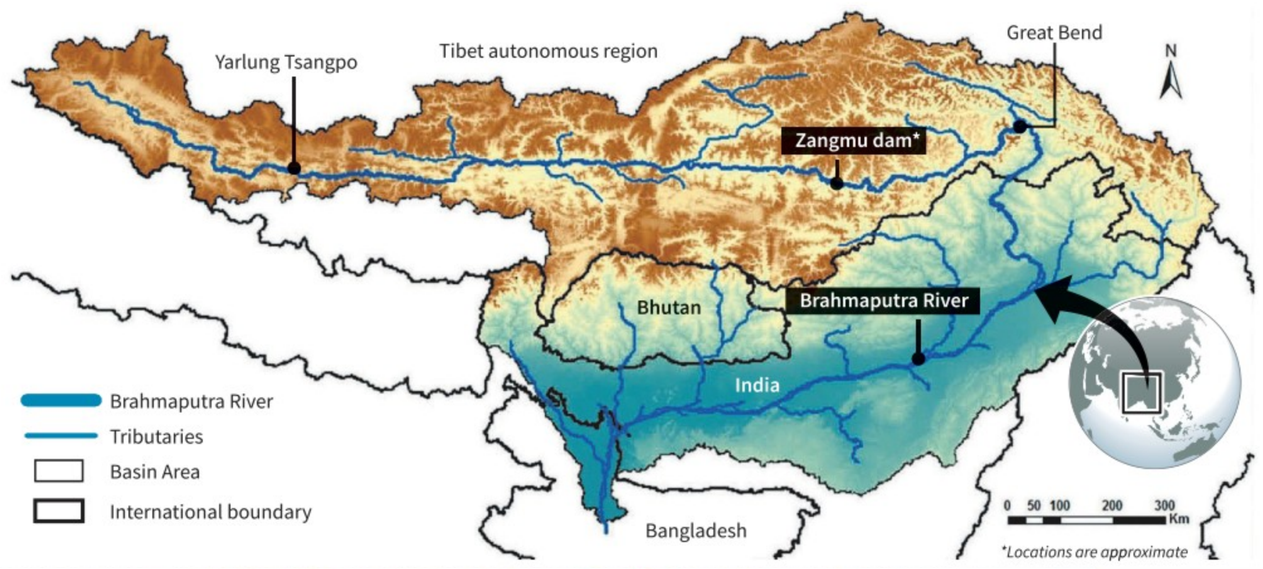
An accurate sense of history will help contextualise the site of the Medog dam being built by China. One of the greatest earthquakes of modern times, the 1950 Medog Earthquake, or the Assam-Tibet Earthquake, which transformed the riparian landscape, had its epicenter at Medog in Tibet. The earthquake had disastrous effects downstream in Assam and Bangladesh, with the landscape until now trapped in an unending cycle of annual catastrophic floods.

Philip Ball in his book titled *Water Kingdom: A Secret History of China* describes the Yarlung Zangbo being viewed in Chinese history as a 'river gone rogue' as it turns sharply from its west to east route at the Great Bend, to turn south to enter India, with other major rivers in China running from west to east. While China is going ahead with building mega-dams in Tibet to correct this geographical anomaly by disciplining a 'rogue river', India can assume an important riparian leadership role for regional river systems by not mirroring what China does. A dam for a dam will make the entire Himalayan riparian/climatic systems run dry and turn it into a disaster-scape for its communities.

Mirza Zulfiqur Rahman is a Visiting Associate Fellow at the Institute of Chinese Studies, Delhi, India.

Taming the 'rogue' river

The Brahmaputra is a transboundary Himalayan river basin spanning four riparian countries. This map shows its flow from the Tibetan Autonomous Region in China through Bhutan and India into Bangladesh.



Power play: Zangmu was the first hydropower project on China's Brahmaputra (Yarlung Tsangpo) to become operational, in 2014. PICTURE: TWITTER

Source: Non-decisions are also decisions: power interplay between Bangladesh and India over the Brahmaputra River (DOI: 10.1080/02508060.2018.1554767)

THE GIST

- The Brahmaputra is a transboundary Himalayan river basin spanning four riparian countries. China is the uppermost riparian nation with the river system originating in the TAR, where it is known as the Yarlung Zangbo.
- There is a face-off between China and India on the Yarlung Zangbo-Brahmaputra river course. China has announced the biggest hydropower project at the Great Bend while India has announced its largest dam project, at Upper Siang.
- The dams across the Himalayas aim at territorialising river systems, breaking their natural life cycles. This affects agro-pastoral communities, biodiversity, living biota in rivers and wetland systems.

BTP to introduce 5-second countdown timer at VAC signals

Commuters are caught unawares as these signals turn green suddenly

Shreyas H.S.
BENGALURU

An AI-powered traffic signal in Bengaluru FILE PHOTO

The Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP) are now working to introduce a 5-second countdown clock before the light turns green for Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered Vehicle Actuated Control (VAC) signals in the city. Currently, this facility is not available in these signals.

Given that the length of a red signal is now dynamic at VAC signals, which turn green depending on the density of traffic on each arm of the signal, commuters are caught unaware when it turns green.

"If there is a timer, we can be prepared for the signal to turn green. We switch off our ignitions as well, turning them on seconds before the signal turns green. But in these new AI-powered signals, since we do not know when they will turn green, we are forced to keep the engine on, causing much fuel wastage," said Mukesh Kumar, who rides a bike to work in the city.

BTP is about to fix this issue shortly. "We have understood this problem faced by commuters and are now working to incorporate a 5-second countdown timer in these signals before they turn green. This will help commuters get ready to pass through," said M.N. Anucheth, Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic), Bengaluru.

Meanwhile, many commuters have complained that it is not just waiting on a signal arm that is red to turn green that poses a problem; even passing through the green signals was proving to be difficult. The AI-powered system changes from red to green and green to red on various arms of a signal very fast and the orange signal between these hardly registers, commuters complain.

Rudresh S., a commuter who rides his bike to work, said that at several junctions, the switch over between green to red happens in a fraction of seconds posing danger. "The commuters apply brakes suddenly in panic and there is a big possibility of vehicles coming from behind ramming into the ones in front. The yellow light stays merely for 2 seconds," he said.

Sharif, a cab driver, said at Hudson Circle, this had become a regular problem. "I nearly escaped an accident when the signal suddenly turned red while I was moving and opened for another road. I had to accelerate to pass through.," he said.

Presently, AI-powered VAC systems have been installed at 100 junctions and 65 more will be added by the end of March in the first phase. In the next phase, 300 more signals will be converted to VAC signals, Mr. Anucheth said.

Hike in bus fares: Frustrated commuters demand better services, more buses

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

KSRTC passengers at Kempegowda Bus Stand at Majestic in Bengaluru on Saturday. K. MURALI KUMAR

The 15% hike in bus fares across Karnataka's four bus transport corporations, implemented at midnight on Sunday, has sparked discontent among commuters on its first day. The fare hike, approved by the State Cabinet earlier this week, was formalised through a Government Order issued on Saturday.

The Order cited increased fuel costs, rising employee salaries, maintenance, and the need for fleet expansion as justifications for the decision.

Daily wage workers felt the pinch of the hike the most. "I travel from Bidadi to Bengaluru every day for work. Even a slight increase in fares impacts my already tight budget. The buses are also less in number and crowded. The government should increase the number of buses too," Pradeep K., a construction labourer said.

Daily wage workers across the State were the most impacted by the 15% hike in bus fares

'Unfair and unjust'

The fare revision has been criticised as ill-timed by several passengers, who argued it burdens commuters already grappling with inflation.

The Bengaluru Bus Prayanikara Vedike (BBPV) has called for an immediate withdrawal of the bus fare hike announced by the Karnataka government, deeming it "unfair and unjust." In a press release issued on Sunday, the vedike criticised the decision, arguing that it disproportionately burdens the working class, who rely heavily on buses as a lifeline for daily commutes.

"This fare hike discourages the use of public transport at a time when we need more buses and free public transport to tackle Bengaluru's traffic woes. Penalising those who use public transport is a step in the wrong direction," the statement read. The vedike proposed alternative revenue-generation methods, including implementing parking and congestion fees for private vehicle users, particularly during peak hours, and introducing a traffic cess for private companies based on their employees' private transport use.

The BBPV urged the government to reallocate funds earmarked for large infrastructure projects, such as tunnel roads and flyovers, to strengthen Bengaluru's bus system. "These projects have proven ineffective in solving traffic congestion. Instead, priority should be given to creating bus lanes and expanding the capacity and coverage of bus services," the BBPV stated, also suggesting making car travel expensive through a congestion tax.

Exact change

While the fare increase has affected all passengers, male commuters faced the additional challenge of handling cash transactions. Many passengers expressed frustration over difficulty in providing exact change to conductors following the revision. With women benefitting from the Shakti scheme that provides them free bus travel on State-run buses, conductors primarily rely on male passengers for cash payments.

"I usually carry exact change for my daily commute from Majestic to BTM Layout, which earlier cost ₹25. Now, I have to pay ₹28, which is ₹3 more," said Praveen Kumar, a resident of BTM Layout. "If I pay ₹30, conductors often don't have ₹2 change. It's very difficult now with the revised fares, and I'm constantly searching for small denominations, especially during peak hours. It's frustrating," he reiterated.

Chief Minister says step was necessary

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

Siddaramaiah

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday, however, defended the fare hike saying that it has become necessary for the smooth functioning of the State-run transport undertakings.

"Bus fares have been revised from time to time, during the rule of all parties. It is required to ensure optimal revenue flows to the State-run transport undertakings for employee salaries revisions, absorbing diesel price hike, buying new buses and to beat inflation. The last revision was done several years ago and the corporations are suffering losses due to high operational costs. The recent revision will help them stabilise their finances," he told mediapersons in Belagavi.

Criticises Opposition

"Why are the Opposition parties targeting us? Were the fares not increased during the BJP or Janata Dal(S) rule? Has the Centre not increased railway fares," he questioned.

Timings
BENGALURU

MONDAY, JAN. 06		
RISE	06:43	SET 18:07
RISE	11:36	SET 00:00
TUESDAY, JAN. 07		
RISE	06:44	SET 18:08
RISE	12:17	SET 00:08
WEDNESDAY, JAN. 08		
RISE	06:44	SET 18:09
RISE	13:01	SET 01:03

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	30	18
Mysuru	28	15
Bengaluru	27	14

Bengaluru Today
28°C The weather will be dry. Morning will be cool with mist and haze. Day will be comfortable. Night also will be cool.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
28°C Morning will be cool with mist and haze. Day will be comfortable. Dry weather to prevail.

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THE HINDU
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Building owner, contractor, BBMP officials booked

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Hours after the tragic death of the Class 10 student Tejaswini Bai S., caused by a freak accident in which a wooden pole fell on her head from the sixth floor of an under-construction building on National High School Road on Saturday, the V.V. Puram Police have booked the building owner, contractor, site engineer and concerned civic officials under section 106 (causing death due to negligence) of Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita, 2023.

The case was registered based on the complaint by the girl's father Sudhakar Rao, who alleged negligence on the part of the accused. There were no safety measures - like a net or security cover at the construction site endangering the safety of people walking in front of the building, leading to death of Tejaswini, Mr. Rao said in his complaint. He also alleged the incident showed that the concerned BBMP officials failed to monitor the construction of the building and ensure safety, and hence they were also liable to be prosecuted, he said.

The V.V. Puram Police have now summoned the accused for questioning.

Man arrested for murder

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Alert members of a family caught a construction labourer who hacked a 60-year-old relative to death to steal 30 goats from him in Devalakere village in Pavagada taluk of Tumakuru district on Saturday.

The accused Manikantha, 36, from a neighbouring village attacked Narasihmaiah with a sickle, killing him on the spot while he had taken his goats grazing on the outskirts of his village. Narasimhaiah was a former member of the gram panchayat and was related to Manikantha. After killing Narasimhaiah, Manikantha herded 30 goats to Hiriyur fair and tried to sell them to make a quick buck.

Meanwhile, Narasimhaiah's son Manjunath realised his father did not return for lunch and went in search him. He found him dead in a pool of blood with multiple injuries and also noticed that the goats were missing. Realising that the assailants had stolen the goats, Manjunath, his friends and family members began searching for the goats. They reached Hiriyur fair and caught Manikantha red-handed.

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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, RAKSHIT Uday Jain, S/O: Udayakumar Jain, R/O: F.No 108, 1st Flr, 17th C CRS, 15th Main, "Shravanthi Shashwathi" Aprt, JP Nagar 5th PH, Bengaluru –078, Have Changed my Name as Rakshit Uday Kumar Jain, Vide Affidavit date on 02/01/25.

I, V.Muralidhar R/o No. 91, 7th Cross, 2nd Main, Maruthi Layout, Vasanthpura, Bangalore- 560061 have changed my minor son name from V.M.Harishankar to V.M.Athish for all purposes.

I, Abdul Baduzzma S/o Mohammed Rafeeq Ahmed, H.No #173, MSK mill Road, Misba Nagar, Near Arabic School, Kalburgi-585103, have changed my name to Abdul Badi Uzzama vide Affidavit dated 02-01-2025 before Notary Appasaheb. B.Sunagar.- Kalaburagi.

TENDERS

THE TRAVANCORE SUGARS & CHEMICALS LTD.
(A Kerala Government Company)
Valanjavattom P.O., Thiruvalla, Kerala - 689 104
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Email: travancoresugars65@gmail.com
Website: www.travancoresugars.com

TENDER NOTICE

E-Tenders are invited for (https://etenders.kerala.gov.in) TENDER FOR THE SUPPLY OF PET BOTTLES (750 Ml) FOR THE PERIOD FROM **15.01.2025 TO 14.01.2026 (Tender ID-2024_TSC_721769_1) & Last Date of Submission - 08.01.2025 at 5 PM).** For more details contact office/ website.

Thiruvalla 03.01.2025 (Sd/-) GM (i/c)

LEGAL NOTICE

Before the Hon'ble MACT Kozhikode
OP (MV) 78/2022 & 79/2022

Priya & Dileep Kumar : *Petitioners*
Popular Mega Motor India Ltd & Others : *Respondents*
Satheesh, S/o.Sreenivasa Reddy, 405/E, Hesaraghatta, Bangalore North, Karnataka : 2nd *Respondent*

It is informed that this case is posted to 27.01.2025 for the appearance of 2nd Respondent

Amrutha Raju
Adv for Petitioner

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE PRL JUNIOR CIVIL JUDGE :: DHARMAVARAM

O.S.No.: 297/2021

Between :
K.Nagarathnamma ...Plaintiff
And
S. Nagarathna and Others ...Defendants

Notice to the Defendant No: 4

D4:: S.Gangamma W/o S. Kannaiah, Namjappa circle , opposite muslim smasanavatika, santhi nagar, Bangalore.

Please take notice that the above Suit stands posted on **21-01-2025** for your appearance. So attend before the above Hon'ble Court at **10:30** A.M. on **21-01-2025** either in person or through the Advocate failing which the matter will be decided ex-parte

(By Order of the Hon'ble Court)

S. SRIKANTH,
Advocate, Ananthapuramu.
Cell: 9177916065.

IN THE COURT OF THE SENIOR CIVIL JUDGE :: DHARMAVARAM

O.S.No.: 21/2024

Between :
Reddyvari Konda Reddy ... Plaintiff
And
P.Mohammad Shareef ...Defendant

Notice to the Defendant

P.Mohammad Shareef, S/o P.Shaik Fakruddin, Hindu, R/of # 17, Veerasagar Main Road, Munishwar Layout, Yelahanka New Town, Bengaluru, Karnataka State.

Please take notice that the above Suit stands posted on **20-01-2025** for your appearance. So attend before the above Hon'ble Court at **10:30** A.M. on **20-01-2025** either in person or through the Advocate failing which the matter will be decided ex-parte

(By Order of the Hon'ble Court)

C.RAMAKRISHNA REDDY,
Advocate, Dharmavaram,
Sri Sathya Sai Dist., A.P.
Cell: 9491121456

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified that, my clients have agreed to purchase the Schedule property from its owner **SRI.M.V.BALAJI** S/o Sri.M.V.Manjunath, residing at: No.128, 1st Main Road, Chamarajpet, Bengaluru – 5600018

Apart from the said owner, if any other person/s have any manner of claim or interest or demand over the Schedule property or any part thereof by way of sale, lease, mortgage, gift, lien, charge, trust, maintenance, easement, pre-emption or otherwise howsoever, they are hereby requested to file their objection/s (along with the photocopies of the documents on which they are relying), with the undersigned within **14 days** from the date of publication of this notice. Objection/s received thereafter will not be binding on my clients.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of the residential property bearing Municipal No.122 (PID No.46-3-122), 123 (PID No.46-3-123) and 123/1 (PID No.46-3-123/1), measuring East to West 30ft and North to South 108ft, together with a building thereon, situated at Albert Victor Road, Chamarajpete, Bangalore and bounded on:

East by : Private property
West by : Private property
North by : Road
South by : Conservancy

Sd/- S.F. GOUTAM CHAND, Advocate,
GOUTAM ASSOCIATES,
No.60, 2nd Floor, Old Kanakapura Road,
Basavanagudi, Bengaluru - 560004

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client **Mr. CHOLLANGI POORNA CHANDRA RAO** resident of Flat No.3083, Prestige Bagamane Temple Bells, Javarandoddi, Rajarajeswarinagar, Bangalore-560098, intends to purchase schedule property from Sri.PATIL LAKSHMI NARASIMHA REDDY & MRS. CHUKKALURU NAGAPADMAJA both are residing at No.97,MAHAVIR Horizon, Hoodi, Mahadevapura, Bangalore-48. Any person, claiming to have any charge, lien, interest minor, claims, right/s whatsoever over the schedule property may lodge their claim to the undersigned with documentary proof on or before 12/01/2025 failing which my clients will treat that there are no objections or claims in respect of the schedule property no claims shall be entertained thereafter.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the Ground, first, second and third floor bearing Villa No.97,formed in residential converted Sy No's. 44/1, 44/3, 44/4, 45/1, 45/2, 45/3, 51/1 and 51/3 situated at Hoodi Village, K.R. Puram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk in the Community / Layout known as "MAHAVEER HORIZON", measuring East to West : 12 METRES and North to South : 10.10 METRES and bounded on:- East by : Road, West by: Villa No.119, North by: Villa No.96, South by: Villa No.98.

From: **VEMURI.SRINIVAS** Advocate
MA, LLB, KAR NO.514/99
Sri. Venkateswara Rao Nilaya,
Bhagawanthi Associates, No.613,
Kaveri layout, Marathalli, Bangalore-37.
Mobile : 9243110037
Mail : vsradvocate37@gmail.com

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD

INVITATION FOR TENDER (Through KPP Portal Only)

BWSSB invites tenders from registered agencies for the following works.

Office of the Chief Engineer (West), 6th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560 009.

Sl. No.	Division	IFT Number	Amount put to tender / EMD (in Rs.)	Last date & time for Submission of Tender	Date & time for Opening of Tender
1	West-2	BWSSB/EE(W-2)/PB/4433/2024-25 Date: 02.01.2025 (Call-2)	Rs. 64,75,382/- / Rs. 1,29,600/-	15.01.2025 upto 3:00 p.m.	17.01.2025 after 3:00 p.m.
2		BWSSB/EE(W-2)/PB/4433/2024-25 Date: 02.01.2025	Rs. 24,10,452/- / Rs. 50,000/-		

Sd/- Executive Engineer (West)-2.

3	North West-2	BWSSB/EENW-2/TO/PB/4297/ 2024-25 Date: 03.01.2025 (Call-3)	Rs. 73,21,377/- / Rs. 1,46,500/-	14.01.2025 upto 4:00 p.m.	15.01.2025 after 4:30 p.m.
4		BWSSB/EENW-2/TO/PB/4297/ 2024-25 Date: 03.01.2025 (Call-5)	Rs. 54,73,871/- / Rs. 1,09,500/-		

Sd/- Executive Engineer (North West)-2.

Office of the Chief Engineer (North), 2nd Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560 009.

5	North-1	BWSSB/EE(N)-1/TO/3272/2024-25 Date: 03.01.2025 (Call-2)	Rs. 77,04,075/- / Rs. 1,54,500/-	13.01.2025 upto 5:00 p.m.	15.01.2025 after 5:30 p.m.

Sd/- Executive Engineer (North-1).

Office of the Chief Engineer (Design & Quality Assurance), 9th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560 009.

6	Borewell	BWSSB/EBWTE/AE/6112/2024-25 Date: 03.01.2025	Rs. 70.10 Lakhs / Rs. 1,40,300/-	13.01.2025 upto 4:00 p.m.	15.01.2025 at 4:00 p.m.

Sd/- Executive Engineer(Borewell).

Office of the Chief Engineer (East), 6th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560 009.

7	East-1	BWSSB/EE(EAST)-1/PB/3527/ 2024-25 Date: 03.01.2025(Call-2)	Rs. 50,87,675/- / Rs. 1,01,800/-	20.01.2025 upto 4:00 p.m.	22.01.2025 after 5:00 p.m.
8		BWSSB/EE(EAST)-1/PB/3527/ 2024-25 Date: 03.01.2025(Call-2)	Rs. 37,55,260/- / Rs. 75,105/-		
9		BWSSB/EE(EAST)-1/PB/3529/ 2024-25 Date: 03.01.2025(Call-2)	Rs. 49,33,681/- / Rs. 98,700/-		
10		BWSSB/EE(EAST)-1/PB/3529/ 2024-25 Date: 03.01.2025(Call-2)	Rs. 66,58,681/- / Rs.1,33,200/-		
11		BWSSB/EE(EAST)-1/PB/3531/ 2024-25 Date: 03.01.2025(Call-2) (Reserved for SC Category)	Rs. 48,91,996/- / Rs. 49,000/-		
12		BWSSB/EE(EAST)-1/PB/3531/ 2024-25 Date: 03.01.2025(Call-3) (Reserved for SC Category)	Rs. 30,92,608/- / Rs. 30,926/-		
13		BWSSB/EE(EAST)-1/PB/3533/ 2024-25 Date: 03.01.2025(Call-2)	Rs. 69,32,858/- / Rs. 1,38,700/-		
14		BWSSB/EE(EAST)-1/PB/3533/ 2024-25 Date: 03.01.2025(Call-2)	Rs. 29,98,674/- / Rs. 60,000/-		
15		BWSSB/EE(EAST)-1/PB/3533/ 2024-25 Date: 03.01.2025(Call-2)	Rs. 24,06,322/- / Rs. 50,000/-		
16		BWSSB/EE(EAST)-1/PB/3535/ 2024-25 Date: 03.01.2025(Call-3)	Rs. 10,26,862/- / Rs. 26,000/-		
17		BWSSB/EE(EAST)-1/PB/3535/ 2024-25 Date: 03.01.2025(Call-3)	Rs. 11,87,756/- / Rs. 29,700/-		
18		BWSSB/EE(EAST)-1/PB/3535/ 2024-25 Date: 03.01.2025(Call-3)	Rs. 15,12,599/- / Rs. 37,900/-		

Sd/- Executive Engineer (East)-1.

The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-procurement portal process can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.** For further details contact the above signed office during working hours.

DIPR/CP/RA/4112/2024-25

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FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Shompen people, a vulnerable tribal group of the Nicobar islands. FILE PHOTO

Empower the guardians of the earth, do not rob them

A unilateral decision to establish three wildlife sanctuaries in southern Nicobar will deprive the indigenous peoples of their ancestral territories. For millennia, these historically isolated indigenes have relied on these islands as resource reservoirs for sustenance and protected them

Ajay Saini
Manish Chandi

The ₹72,000-crore mega infrastructure project on Great Nicobar will now also have an international cruise terminal and a shipbreaking yard, as proposed by the Union Shipping Ministry. In this article, dated April 22, 2024, Ajay Saini and Manish Chandi talk about the rights of the indigenous communities over the little islands of the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago and how they have been able to protect and preserve the area's ecological balance.

In the southern expanse of the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago, off the shores of Little Nicobar, lie seven tiny islands. Classified as "uninhabited" in the government's records, these islets are nonetheless integral to the indigenous communities of the region. Two, officially called Meroë and Menchal, are known as Piruii and Pingaeyak, respectively, to the Payuh, the indigenous southern Nicobarese peoples, who hold traditional rights over these and other islets.

For millennia, these historically isolated indigenes have relied on these islands as resource reservoirs for sustenance and protected them. Menchal is revered, used, and protected under the spiritual realm called Pingaeyak (a spirit that is believed to reside on the island), prohibiting the overexploitation of resources or any undue harm to its ecosystem. Similarly, Meroë is believed to be the abode of a legendary islander community. Here, too, spiritual belief systems influence how the islanders use and protect natural resources.

Meroë and Menchal are managed by community elders as guardians and specific individual caretakers. They ensure the protection of the island's resources and sustainability. In today's world, this phenomenon goes by the name of "conservation" and "sustainable use", among other terms and phrases.

Conservation colonialism

In May 2022, in complete disregard of the indigenous land ownership and management systems, the Andaman and Nicobar (A&N) administration issued three public notices, announcing its intention to create three wildlife sanctuaries: a coral sanctuary at Meroë Island, a megapode sanctuary at Menchal Island, and a leatherback turtle sanctuary on Little Nicobar Island.

In mid-July, the A&N administration issued an order asserting that it did not receive any claims or objections from any individual regarding the land and marine areas within the three proposed sanctuaries; that no individual enjoys any rights within the boundaries of the proposed sanctuaries. And, that there will be "restriction on the people of neighbouring area to enter into these islands... in the national interest."

Approximately 1,200 southern Nicobarese inhabit Patai Takaru (Great Nicobar Island), and Patai t-bhi (Little Nicobar Island), holding traditional rights over both inhabited and ostensibly "uninhabited" islands. Yet, the A&N administration neither consulted nor informed the southern Nicobarese of its plans.

Despite verbal supplications and a letter in August 2022 from the Little & Great Nicobar Tribal Council that expressed the community's concerns to the A&N administration and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, the A&N administration proceeded to issue official notifications in October 2022, designating the whole of Meroë (2.73 square kilometres, including the surrounding marine area) and Menchal (1.29 sq. km), along with a 13.75 sq. km area (including 6.67 sq. km. of water area within the baseline system) on Little Nicobar (140 sq. km), as wildlife sanctuaries.

Masking an ecological disaster

The selection of Meroë and Menchal Islands as conservation reserves for coral reefs and Megapode birds is arbitrary. Menchal does not have more than a pair or two of the endemic Megapode birds. Similarly, questions arise regarding the actual diversity and abundance of corals on Meroë Island.

Notably, the announcement of wildlife sanctuaries coincided with growing scrutiny and criticism from experts over the denotification of the Galathea Bay Wildlife Sanctuary for a ₹72,000-crore mega project on Great Nicobar, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

Establishing exclusionary conservation areas in a region, which is already a paradise for biodiversity, stems from the fact that the champions of the mega project are aware of the extensive environmental and social damage that the project will entail. It will devastate about eight to 10 lakh evergreen forest trees, smother and gouge out scores of coral reefs found along Galathea Bay, destroy the nesting site for the globally endangered Leatherback sea turtle species, devastate hundreds of nesting mounds of Nicobar Megapodes, and kill as many crocodiles.

Furthermore, it will prevent the indigenous Great Nicobar islanders from returning to their pre-tsunami homeland where they husbanded pigs and chicken, cultivated coconut and betel nut trees, and lived simple and gregarious lives. Most importantly, it will uproot three or more settlements of the Shompen (a 'Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group') and permanently destroy their foraging and hunting grounds.

The unilateral decision to establish wildlife sanctuaries disregards the islands' profound significance to the indigenous population.

Their ancestral lands are unjustly perceived as "no-man's-land" to appease conservationists, investors, public opinion, and more.

Support earth's guardians

Globally, governments blatantly violate indigenous people's rights by evicting them from their ancestral lands, often under the guise of development, national interest, conservation projects, among others. Approximately 476 million indigenous peoples, constitute about 6% of the global population. Indigenous territories cover roughly 22% of the planet's land surface and harbour 80% of its biodiversity.

Indigenous peoples are the original guardians of our earth. The world must learn from their wisdom. Reason and justice dictate that in southern Nicobar, we should support and empower the islanders to continue to steward their ancestral territories, rather than robbing them of their lands, resources, lifeways, and worldviews.

Ajay Saini teaches at the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi. Manish Chandi is an independent researcher with over two decades of research experience in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

Shall I give give dancing a whirl?

The priest's magniloquent speeches are very boring. I almost fell asleep yesterday

S. Upendran

What is the meaning of the expression 'give something a whirl' (Rajni Gupta, Madina, Haryana)

The 'h' in 'whirl' is not pronounced; the word rhymes with 'curl', 'pearl' and 'girl'. One of the meanings of 'whirl' is to move round and round rapidly. If you decide to give skydiving a whirl, what it means is that you are going to give the activity a shot. Skydiving is something you have never done before, but are now willing to try it. You do not know if you will enjoy the experience or not, but you are willing to jump out of a plane – for the first time in your life.

If it hadn't been for Ramdas, I don't think I would have given tennis a whirl.

Rama decided to give the recommended ayurveda treatment a whirl.

How is the word 'magniloquent' pronounced? (R. Ramachandran, Tiruvannamalai)

The word consists of four syllables. The first rhymes with 'tag', 'bag' and 'lag', while the vowel in the second, sounds like the 'i' in 'hill', 'chill' and 'bill'. The following 'o' and 'ue' sound like the 'a' in 'china'. The word is pronounced 'mag-NIL-e-kwent' with the stress on the second syllable. It comes from the Latin 'magnus' meaning 'great' and 'loqui' meaning speak. When someone is 'magniloquent' in his speech, he uses big words. The individual uses flowery language, not in order to communicate with the listener, but merely to impress. There is very little substance in what he has to say. Another word which has more or less the same meaning is 'grandiloquent'. According to scholars, 'grandiloquent' is the older of the two.

His own party members were getting tired of his magniloquent speeches.

Get to the point. Don't try to impress me with your magniloquence.

Is it okay to wish someone 'Good morning' at 3:00 PM? (Sai Kumar, Warrangal)

Very often, in our country, when you run into someone at 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon, they greet you by saying 'Good morning'. When you remind them of the time, they respond by saying, "I know it's three o'clock. But since this is the first time I'm seeing you today, it's okay if I say, 'Good morning'!" This, however, is not true. How you greet an individual is determined by what time of day it is – it does not matter if you are seeing the person for the first time. You can wish someone 'Good morning' till 11:59 AM. Between noon and 4:00 PM (sometimes 5), 'Good afternoon' is used. Any time after that, the normal greeting is 'Good evening'. If you meet someone at 11 PM, you will greet him with a 'Good evening'. The only time, you'll say 'Good night' is when you take leave of a person in the evening and are sure that you will not be seeing the individual till the next day.

upendrankye@gmail.com

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

Quiz yourself on two iconic Indians — cricket legend Kapil Dev and maestro A.R. Rahman — who celebrate their birthday on January 6

V.V. Ramanan

QUESTION 1
What was the christened name of A.R. Rahman and the full name of Kapil?

QUESTION 2
If Sadiq Mohammad was Kapil's first Test victim, who was his last and record-setting 434th scalp?

QUESTION 3
Rahman has won seven National Film awards of which two are for Best Background Score. Name the two flicks.

QUESTION 4
At which ground did Kapil score the historic unbeaten 175 during the 1983 Prudential World Cup?

QUESTION 5
It is well-known that Rahman won an Oscar, Grammy, and BAFTA for his work in 'Slumdog Millionaire'. For which 2011 film was he nominated for the above honours but did not get any of them?

QUESTION 6
What is the latest autobiography of Kapil titled?

QUESTION 7
Name the musical that Rahman created in collaboration with the legendary Andrew Lloyd Webber in 2002.

Visual question:
Name this one-off album released by the super group that had Mick Jagger, Joss Stone, Dave Stewart, and A.R. Rahman.

Questions and Answers to the January 3 edition of the daily quiz: 1. The official name of the Khel Ratna award. **Ans: Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award**
2. The name of the award before it was changed in this year. **Ans: Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award; 2021**
3. The first recipient of this award and the youngest recipient of this award. **Ans: Viswanathan Anand; Abhinav Bindra (before Gukesh Dommaraju)**
4. This award is considered as India's second highest sporting honour. **Ans: Arjuna Award**
5. The person who got the award despite Paralympic athlete Girisha Nagarajegowda's court case. **Ans: Sania Mirza**
6. The number of cricket players who have received the award till now. **Ans: Five**
Visual: Identify the player. **Ans: Geet Sethi**
Early Birds: Aman Krishnan| Rajmohan Velayudhan| Abhimukteswaran| L.S.Hareesh| Aiswarya Mohan

Word of the day

Addlepated:
stupid and confused

Synonyms: addlebrained, muddleheaded

Usage: *The blow made me addlepated and weakened my legs.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/addlepatedpro

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

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GOVERNMENT OF JHARKHAND

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प्रति माह

दिनांक : 06 जनवरी 2025

समय : 12:30 बजे अपराह्न

स्थान : ट्रेनिंग ग्राउण्ड, खोजाटोली
(कुटियातु चौक), नामकुम, राँची

PR NO- 343615 IPRD(24-25)D

योजना से संबंधित वीडियो देखने के लिए
QR CODE को स्कैन करें

हेमन्त सोरेन
मुख्यमंत्री, झारखण्ड

सूचना एवं जनसम्पर्क विभाग, झारखण्ड सरकार

‘Council mahazar by CID will not be allowed till it provides more details’

Legislative Council Chairman Basavaraj Horatti says he will talk to Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar and C.T. Ravi, MLC, to try and ‘mediate peace between them’

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

A day after Women and Child Development Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar filed a complaint with audio and video files with respect to C.T. Ravi, BJP MLC, allegedly making obscene remarks at her in the Legislative Council in Belagavi, Council Chairman Basavaraj Horatti on Sunday said that as of now he would not allow the Criminal Investigation Department to conduct a mahazar (spot investigation) of the Council hall unless the CID provides details in this regard.

Mr. Horatti, who was in Belagavi to attend a private programme, told pressperson: “Investigators have sought permission to enter the Council hall in Belagavi and conduct the mahazar. But they will not be allowed to visit the site in the House as of now, till they provide details.”

The case initially registered by the Hire Bagewadi police has now been transferred to the CID.

Chairman Basavaraj Horatti during the Legislative Council session at the Suvarna Vidhana Soudha in Belagavi. FILE PHOTO

Mr. Horatti said he would consider allowing investigation into the hall only if the CID officers provided his office with all details of the investigation, including what they would want to do inside the hall.

“The said incident happened in the House. It was not a fight or assault or anything like that, which could leave some scenes at the spot. So, what will the CID sleuths look for? Will they check the chairs and desks or will they check the floor?,” he said.

In an obvious reference to the Minister’s office’s claims that a complaint with electronic evidence was filed on Saturday, he said that he had received the complaint. “I will ask my staff to go through it and submit a report. It will then be sent for a forensic examination,” he said.

Mr. Horatti claimed that it was the first time that Ms. Hebbalkar had filed a complaint with him.

“Earlier, Mr. Ravi had filed a complaint and we had one side of the story. Now, we have both sides. I will read through all the relevant documents now,” he said.

To a query, he said he was not present when the alleged exchange happened and that he had adjourned the House by then.

However, the Minister’s office claimed that this was the second complaint filed by her with the Council Chairman’s office.

Sources said that this time, she had filed a written complaint to the Chairman, along with electronic evidence of the exchange.

“The first complaint was filed on the day of the offence. The second was filed on Saturday, along with some evidence that includes audio and video files. They include copies of videos downloaded from the NIC website that was live-streaming the session,” an officer in the Minister’s office said.

Mr. Horatti said he will also try to “mediate peace between the parties by speaking to both of them”.

“It does not seem that the issue will be resolved through mediation as it has gained political dimensions. I will however, try again. I have spoken to them in the past and I will do so again,” he added.

It’s an over 60 per cent commission govt., charges Kumaraswamy

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

Janata Dal (S) leader and Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel, H.D. Kumaraswamy, on Sunday alleged that payment of commission for release of funds to government contracts had crossed 60 per cent in the present Congress regime.

Speaking to reporters here, Mr. Kumaraswamy referred to a reported statement made by a contractor belonging to the Congress in Tumakuru to support his accusation.

“A contractor, who is a Congress worker representing an association in Tumakuru has claimed that commission had now crossed 60 per cent and claimed that situation was better in the earlier regime,” Mr. Kumaraswamy said.

The JD (S) leader alleged that the payment of bribes was not restricted just for release of funds for contracts in Public Works and Irrigation departments. Now, even beneficiaries of housing schemes would have to pay bribe, he alleged.

Further, Mr. Kumaraswamy alleged that the bribe, which was earlier collected by the local panchayat development officer, would now have to be paid to the Minister at Vidhana Soudha before the house is released to the beneficiary. “In many other departments, the percentage due to the Minister is to be paid before the funds are released,” he charged.

Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy has alleged that the payment of bribes is not restricted just for release of funds for contracts in Public Works and Irrigation departments. FILE PHOTO

> Earlier, we were seeing farmers committing suicide. Now, we are seeing government officials and contractors ending their lives.
>
> **H.D. KUMARASWAMY,** Janata Dal (S) leader and Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel

“Earlier, we were seeing farmers committing suicide. Now, we are seeing government officials and contractors ending their lives,” he claimed. Mr. Kumaraswamy alleged that the Congress, which had secured votes from the people by accusing the earlier BJP government of collecting commission for clearing dues to contractors, was also indulging in the same practice.

Further, he said the Congress government had failed to prove the charges of commission it had levelled against the BJP government.

Bus fare hike

Mr. Kumaraswamy alleged that the Congress government in the State was trying to find reasons to end the guarantee schemes and said the recent hike in bus fares was part of the “conspiracy”.

Pointing out that the bus passengers were not rich people, but daily wagers, farmers, and labourers, who were struggling to make ends meet, Mr. Kumaraswamy said the increase in bus fares would impose a heavy burden on the monthly travel expenses of the poor.

He wondered what would be the purpose of giving ₹2,000 under Gruhalakshmi scheme while snatching as much amount by increasing bus fares.

The JD (S) leader said he was not opposed to the guarantee schemes and alleged that the Congress government was collecting five to six times more money from the people under the pretext of funding the guarantee schemes. He cited the hike imposed on stamp fee and increase on petrol cess, besides the reported plans to increase price of milk and raise water rates and said the increase in the tariffs would affect the common people.

When Mr. Kumaraswamy was asked if the BJP, which was hit by intra-party differences, was playing the role of an Opposition effectively, Mr. Kumaraswamy said it was for the people to answer the question.

BYV is temporary State party chief: Yatnal

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

B.Y. Vijayendra is only a temporary president of the State BJP. A full-time president will be appointed soon, Basanagouda R. Patil Yatnal, MLA, said in Vijayapura on Sunday.

“We do not have a full-time president now. But we will soon have one. The State unit will leave it to the Central unit to appoint a new president,” he told reporters.

He said that he would not criticise Mr. Vijayendra for not leading the agitations against Minister Priyank Kharge in Kalaburagi.

Six suspected Maoists express wish to return to the mainstream

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA

Of them, four are from Karnataka and one each from Kerala and Tamil Nadu

As many as six suspected Maoists are said to have expressed a wish to return to the mainstream, following efforts by a State committee to oversee the implementation of the rehabilitation policy to assimilate/surrender Left-wing extremists.

Mundagaru Latha, Sundari Kutlur, Vanajakshi Balehole, Mareppa Aroli, Vasanth T.N., and Jeesha are said to have consulted members of the State committee, sources said.

All of them are expected to appear before the Chikkamagaluru district administration in a couple of days and make a statement of their wish to join the mainstream.

Of them, four are from Karnataka and one each from Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

The members of the committee and people representing Shantigagi Nagarikera Vedike, a citizens’ forum for peace, held a meeting with senior officers of the State government in Bengaluru on Saturday.

On behalf of the suspected Maoists, they appealed to officials that the government should ensure that those who return to the mainstream do not languish in jail for a long time, as it happened in the case of those who accepted the surrender policy earlier.

Earlier this year, a group of eight Naxals returned to Karnataka from the tri-junction point, in the midst of Kerala, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu.

Among them, Vikram Gowda was killed in an encounter on November 18, 2024. Of the remaining seven, six are said to be ready to accept the surrender policy and return to the mainstream.

Youth should be wary of vested interests, says Siddaramaiah

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday said that youth should be wary of vested interests which are trying to exploit religious and caste differences to destabilise peace in the State and the country.

Inaugurating a State-level youth festival in Davangere, the Chief Minister said that the youth should stay away from such harmful influences not just for their own future, but also for the future of society. “These vested interests pose obstacles to the development of the society and the country,” he observed.

He said that young people who develop a sense of social responsibility could prove to be a valuable asset to the nation and added that it was important for them to pursue scientific and intellectual education together and work towards creating equal opportunities for all and contribute to universal advancement. “Young people should strive to shape their future with the resolve to grow up to be assets to the country,” he said.

He asked the young generation to read and understand the Constitution and to strive to protect and preserve its values. “It was possible for me to become the Chief Minister only because of the Constitution that guarantees fundamental rights and prescribes directive principles of state policy. We should all realise that every citizen deserves economic, social, and political freedom”.

He noted that the Constitution guarantees everyone’s right to practise his own faith. “Instead of asking what the country has given us, we should focus on what we have given to the country. We should try to cultivate an equal society and nurture democracy,” he declared.

Back up your charges with evidence, CM tells Opposition

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

Taking exception to the allegations of corruption levelled against his government by Union Minister and Janata Dal (S) leader H.D. Kumaraswamy, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday said that leaders of Opposition parties should not make baseless allegations. Any allegation should be backed by data or proof of irregularities, he added.

“It is not the job of the Opposition just to make baseless allegations. When they accuse the ruling party of indulging in irregularities, they should back it up with documents and data. They should not make charges without any basis,” the Chief Minister told media persons in Davangere.

He was responding to the allegations made by Mr. Kumaraswamy that his government was charging a commission of 60% in all government works.

The Chief Minister denied reports that political discussions figured during the recent dinner at the house of Minister Satish Jarkiholi.

Mr. Siddaramaiah said that the issue of Cabinet expansion would be decided after discussion with the high command.

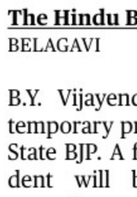
He said that the Budget would be presented in March and that the dates would be finalised soon.

To a query on whether there would be a change of guard at the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee, he said that the party high command would decide on the issue.

CORRIDORS OF POWER

Minister exposes absenteeism

Government officials’ absenteeism in taluk offices seems to be rampant in several taluks in Karnataka. Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda *(pictured)* himself had exprienced first hand the absenteeism of senior officials such as tahsildars and sub-registrars during his surprise visit to offices in K.R. Puram, Doddaballapur, and Maddur and other taluk offices in the recent months.

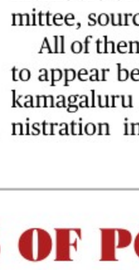


In K.R. Puram taluk office, the Minister found irregularities in the maintenance of the attendance book. Despite the absence of an official for nine days, there was no mention of the official’s presence or absence in the attendance book. Many senior officials, including tahsildars, were found coming late to the office citing traffic jams and attendance of court cases.

In Doddaballapur office, except a couple of ‘C’ grade employees, none of the senior officials attended the office on time. Whether the Minister’s surprise visit will have any impact on the quality of work in the lower-tier of the administration remains to seen.

Political slugfest likely to continue

A game of one-upmanship between loyalists of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah *(pictured)* and his Deputy and KPCC chief D.K. Shivakumar is likely to intensify this year as the latter was apparently keen to become the Chief Minister after 30 months after the formation of the government in May, 2023, as per the reported “power-sharing formula.” Speaking to one of the national media channels, Mr. Shivakumar spoke about “some formula” between him and the Chief Minister. But later the KPCC chief withdrew his statement when Mr. Siddaramaiah asserted that there was no formula. Leaders close to Mr. Siddaramaiah claim that the Chief Minister has not agreed to any power-sharing pact. At the time of government formation, the party high command suggested a power-sharing deal and Mr. Siddaramaiah has not given any categorical answer. But the high command announced that Mr. Shivakumar would continue as the KPCC chief till the end of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.



Continuance of Mr. Shivakumar in the party post post the polls has apparently not gone well with the loyalists of the Chief Minister. Loyalists of the CM were reportedly disappointed when Mr. Shivakumar changed the name of the party’s convention in Hassan on December 5, 2024, as the “Jana Kalyana Samavesha” after it was initially named “Siddaramaiah Swabhimani Janandolana Samavesha” to project his leadership. It would be interesting to see how political drama unfolds in the year ahead.

Awaiting Minister’s return

There seems to be a lull in the Department of School Education and Literacy. Calls made to the department related to any development get a standard answer from officials: “We will take a call after the Minister returns.” Minister Madhu Bangarappa *(pictured)* is away in the United States, accompanying his brother-in-law and Kannada actor Shivarajkumar, who is undergoing treatment at a hospital in Miami. While there is no doubt that standing with the family in a period of crisis is his duty, it can be no excuse to put on hold key decisions and work in the department.

Nagesh Prabhu
Jayanth R.

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD

INVITATION FOR TENDER (only through KPP Portal)

BWSSB invites Tenders from Registered Contractors for the following works.

Office of the Chief Engineer (South), 7th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009

Sl No.	Division	IFT Number	Amount put to Tender / EMD Amount	Last date & time for Submission of Tender	Date & time for Opening of Tender
1.	South-West-2	BWSSB/EESW-2/TO/PB/3482/2024-25 Dated: 03.01.2025 (5th Call)	₹ 11,33,504/- / ₹ 28,400/-	10.01.2025 upto 5:00 pm	13.01.2025 after 10:30 am
2.		BWSSB/EESW-2/TO/PB/3482/2024-25 Dated: 03.01.2025 (3rd Call)	₹ 68,90,668/- / ₹ 1,37,900/-		
3.		BWSSB/EESW-2/TO/PB/3482/2024-25 Dated: 03.01.2025 (2nd Call)	₹ 6,41,601/- / ₹ 16,000/-		
4.		BWSSB/EESW-2/TO/PB/3482/2024-25 Dated: 03.01.2025 (5th Call)	₹ 68,15,066/- / ₹ 1,36,400/-		
5.		BWSSB/EESW-2/TO/PB/3482/2024-25 Dated: 03.01.2025 (3rd Call)	₹ 67,17,353/- / ₹ 1,34,400/-		
6.		BWSSB/EESW-2/TO/PB/3482/2024-25 Dated: 03.01.2025 (4th Call)	₹ 61,95,293/- / ₹ 1,24,000/-		
7.		BWSSB/EESW-2/TO/PB/3482/2024-25 Dated: 03.01.2025 (3rd Call)	₹ 35,61,260/- / ₹ 71,300/-		
8.		BWSSB/EESW-2/TO/PB/3482/2024-25Dt:03.01.2025 (Reserved for SC Category)	₹ 22,85,853/- / ₹ 25,000/-		

Sd/- Executive Engineer (South-West-2)

The detail regarding the tender & participation in the e-procurement portal process can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** For further details contact the undersigned office during working hours.

DIPR/SI/4154/2024-25

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to bring to the notice of the general public that my client **Mrs. V. VIJAYALAKSHMI,** wife of Mr. K. Vivekanand, is the sole and absolute owner in possession of property bearing **Municipal No.12** old No. 24, BBMP PID No.22-29-12 **EPID No. 3759380708** situated at 2nd Cross, Small Scale Industrial Area, 6th Block Rajajinagar, BBMP Ward No.22, New Ward No. 108, Bangalore, **measuring East to West 80 feet North to South 50 feet, in all measuring total 4000 square feet.,** together with existing building measuring 2749.99 Square feet, more fully described in the schedule given here under having acquired under a under a Gift deed executed by her husband on 7-1-2010. **My client intent to sell the schedule property.**

If any person having any claim or right over the Schedule Property, may kindly file their objection / claims with documentary evidence within **10 days** from the date of this notice to the undersigned, failing which it would be presumed that there are no claims over the said property.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of the property bearing **Municipal No.12** old No. 24, BBMP PID No.22-29-12 EPID No. 3759380708 situated at 2nd Cross, Small Scale Industrial Area, 6th Block Rajajinagar, BBMP Ward No.22, New Ward No. 108, Bangalore, **measuring East to West 80 feet North to South 50 feet, in all measuring total 4000 square feet.,** Layout formed by CITB now called BDA, together with existing **building measuring 2749.99 Square feet,** and bounded on :

EAST by : Road,
WEST by : Property bearing No. 33,
NORTH by : Property bearing No. 25,
SOUTH by : Property bearing No.23.

Bangalore, Date: 04.01.2025

ANAND. R. SUDI, Advocate
No. 26, 2nd Main,
Subbanna Garden, Vijayanagar,
Bangalore - 560 040. 9845770467

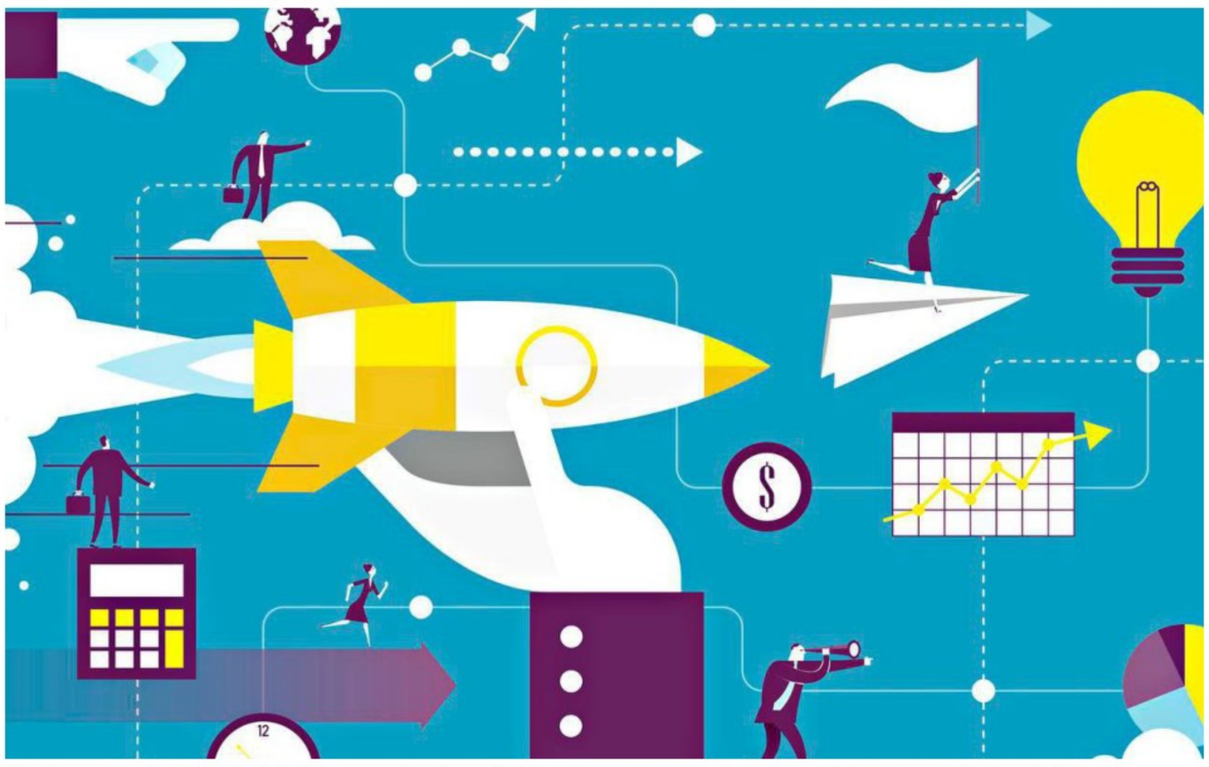
'Bengaluru in a good position to become the deep-tech hub of the country'

Lakshmi Jagannathan, CEO at the Innovation Centre of IIT-B, believes that incubation does not happen inside the four walls of an incubator, but outside where connections are built

INTERVIEW

Dr. Lakshmi Jagannathan

Shilpa Elizabeth
BENGALURU



'The Innovation Centre's mandate is to support start-ups that have innovative ideas, bring in mentors and market access for them, and facilitate IP within the campus for translational research possibilities.' GETTY IMAGES

The International Institute of Information Technology-Bangalore (IIIT-B) has been at the forefront of research related to digital technologies and promoting innovation for the larger public good. Backed by the research prowess of the Institute, the IIIT-B Innovation Centre has been bringing together academia, innovation and entrepreneurship while also fostering collaborations with the government and the industry.

Dr. Lakshmi Jagannathan, CEO at the Innovation Centre, believes incubation doesn't happen inside the four walls of an incubator, but outside where connections are built. "If start-ups can find market, everything else will fall into place," says Jagannathan who feels incubators can play a crucial role in this.

With *The Hindu* she shares her views on how the Innovation Centre differentiates itself, why Bengaluru is poised to become the deep tech hub of the country and how corporates can help by opening up their R&D labs for deep tech startups.

How does IIIT-B Innovation Centre bring together IIIT-B's strengths to build a robust deep tech ecosystem?

The Innovation Centre's mandate is to support start-ups that have innovative ideas, bring in mentors and market access for them, and facilitate IP within the campus for translational research possibilities. It is not called an incubation centre, because we also believe in innovating and working with corporates to facilitate innovations.

Anything to do with digital is IIIT-B's sweet spot. Innovation Centre is very focused on supporting innovations and start-ups in the digital space. That is one part.

Secondly, IIIT-B has about 8-10 research labs/ centres of excellence, managed by faculty and supported by various governments including the Government of Karnataka and the Government of India. We want to work closely with them to see how we could align with their work, get them to mentor startups, and commercialise research.

A bit about some of your programmes

We are an incubation partner for the RBI Innovation Hub, and we are running a pre-incubation programme for about 30 fintech start-ups for them.

We are also doing a pre-incubation programme for 6-7 start-ups that are building digital solutions for Farmer Producer Organisations (FPO) in Karnataka.

Dr. Lakshmi Jagannathan

With Nimhans we are trying to do incubation. We launched a programme called the Deep Engagement and Enrichment Program for Agile Startups (DEEPAS) in the area of mental health and brain health. We are now onboarding about 5 to 6 start-ups who will closely work with Nimhans. They have agreed to bring their clinicians to work with the start-ups for testing and validating ideas. Some of these solutions are going to be validated in the Karnataka Brain Health Initiative (KABI) clinics. In the next stage, we want to get problem statements from Nimhans and identify innovators who can build solutions for them.

IIIT-B Incubation Centre. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

We did two acceleration programmes last year. One is on digital health where we supported about 12 start-ups. Another one was on machine intelligence and automation and was called Industry 4.0. This may be one of the first few industry-led programmes of this kind. We have partnered with the Bangalore Chamber of Industry and Commerce for the same and all the members including TVS and Bosch among others agreed to mentor start-ups.

How does the Innovation Centre differentiate itself?

In India, there are close to 1000 incubators. In Bengaluru alone, there are 100-plus incubators.

Bengaluru is in a very good position to become the deep tech ecosystem for the country. Deep tech requires a lot of intensive R&D, academia, patents, and is a long haul. Due to this, academia is slowly coming to the limelight. Start-ups understand that they need research scholars and academia who can work with them to develop the IP required to build deep tech. The kind of ecosystem in Bengaluru for deep tech is vibrant. There is pro bono mentorship available which you do not see elsewhere. And with digital pervading every aspect of life, IIITB is probably the only institute in Bengaluru which can leverage it to its full extent. At the Innovation Centre, we are talking to corporates interested in innovation and wanting to work with startups. If we have to differentiate and add value to startups, it will be only through finding business for them. Capital is not a major problem today. Market access, market validation, customer connect and the ability to do real business are going to matter. So can we bring these markets to incubators is what we are looking at broadly.

What's the share of IIIT-B start-ups at the Innovation Centre and how do you look at translational research opportunities?

IIIT-B start-ups at the Centre would be around 1-2%. We also map research from IIITB to external start-ups.

Start-ups want money, and business, they want to scale fast. On the other side, maybe a professor who's predominantly interested in research and not business-savvy. It's an ideal fit to bring them together. If there's research available within the campus at a POC or MVP stage, why reinvent the wheel?

Today there are VCs who are looking at co-creation opportunities. There is increasing interest in academia among startups and investors. Such opportunities were not available for academia years back. With deep tech gaining prominence, research-to-commercialization is picking up.

We are now looking at corporates who want to work with us for digital technology innovation in areas which can create societal impact. That could be health, education, sanitation, hygiene, women empowerment...

Around 70% of India is in the rural areas. And there are fundamental problems to be solved around water, health, sanitation, hygiene, women, then environment, pollution, sustainability, and so on. This also makes it a very good market for society-centric technological solutions.

MSME is another interesting area for us. A lot of MSME companies are building smart solutions for smart manufacturing, but they may not be very good at communication, PowerPoint or Excel. Whereas start-ups are very tech-savvy. We wanted to marry the two. So that is one more thing on our priority.

What are some areas for improvement for start-ups and incubators?

One big challenge is early validation and traction.

Today, a lot of government money is available for start-ups at a very early stage. Grants from DST, DBT, Elevate and so on cumulatively add up to ₹50 lakhs. With that you build till the MVP stage, but after that money becomes scarce and a lot of startups struggle. So, you need to make sure that in the early stage itself, you talk to the customer and validate your idea. For example, many are building healthcare solutions without even talking to doctors or clinicians. Finally, when they take it to market, it will be rejected. Out of the 60 solutions we ran by NIMHANS for validations, they said only eight were relevant to them. That means there are 52 guys who have been building something that is not going to be used by those in mental health or neuro fields. A lot of time and resources are wasted.

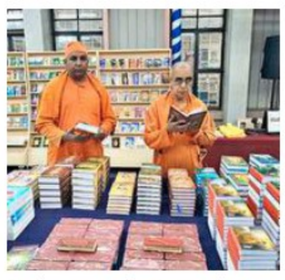
The second part is making use of existing infrastructure and research facilities. The government of Karnataka has now come up with a very good GCC policy. Of the 1700-plus GCCs in India, many are in Bengaluru, and they have very good research capabilities. If these GCCs and corporate R&D labs can open up their research capabilities for start-ups, the latter's design, prototyping, small batch manufacturing and so on can happen at these facilities.

One of the biggest challenges today for deep tech is access to R&D facilities. They don't need capital infrastructure; they need access to capital infrastructure. A huge portion of money from government schemes for incubators is marked for creating capital infrastructure. This is not required.

Instead of everyone creating a lab, we must have a centralized facility which all start-ups can use; Or reach out to corporates who are ready to open up their facilities. I believe corporates are ready to open up, and with this, a large problem of deep tech start-ups could be solved. Many of them, especially those building products or hardware, go to either China or Taiwan for chip designs, small-batch manufacturing and so on. But these facilities are available with corporates here. A lot of corporates are also now looking at how they can work with start-ups as it aligns with their business. We must make use of that.

Incubators must also be more proactive in getting out and building more connections. Incubation doesn't happen inside four walls, it happens outside.

Book exhibition by Ramakrishna Math



Books on meditation and yoga will be available at the exhibition.

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A special book exhibition and sale fair has been organized at the Ramakrishna Math in Basavanagudi, Bengaluru, that started on December 28, 2024 and will continue till 14th January.

Special discounts ranging from 10% to 50% will be offered on books. Revered Swami Nityasthanandaji inaugurated the book exhibition and sale, said a release.

The fair features a wide collection of books, including Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature, Vedanta philosophy, books on meditation and yoga, and personality development.

'If you take a walk, I'll tax your feet' and other joys

Popcorn has three different GST slabs which is a good way to ensure that many of us won't be going to the movies

ABOUT 500 WORDS

Suresh Menon

'I can no longer afford to eat popcorn.'

The older you get, the fewer new year resolutions do you need to make. In your 20s and 30s it is easy to make a list: give up smoking, wake up early, read Tolstoy, apologise to the classmate whose nose you broke in an argument, eat less red meat and so on.

These are, of course, all worthy and wonderful resolutions. But I gave up smoking years ago, don't eat red meat now and wake up early anyway. Maturity is that time in your life when you can make no more new year resolutions. Not because you are perfect and have no bad habits, but because you'd like to keep the remaining bad habits, thank you very much.

But now I have been presented with something to give up. Eating popcorn. I can no longer afford to eat popcorn. Not because it has become prohibitively expensive, although it will become more expensive after the bureaucrat-accountants are through. Luckily, they don't have more important things to work on. Popcorn has three different GST tax slabs which is a good way to ensure that many of us won't be going to the movies either. To adapt the lyrics of a Beatles song, *Should five percent appear too small / Be thankful I don't take it all* .

In case the bureaucrat-accountants have run out of ideas, here's another portion from the same song: *If you try to sit, sit, I'll tax your seat / If you get too cold, I'll tax the heat / If you take a walk I'll tax your feet*.

My problem isn't with the taxes per se. They are wonderful, intelligent, necessary etc, as any news channel will tell you. I mean what could be more charming than having a five percent GST on popcorn mixed with salt, 12 percent GST if it is packaged and labelled and 18 percent if it is caramel popcorn? No issues hereat all.

Five percent GST on popcorn mixed with salt, 12 percent GST if it is packaged and labelled and 18 percent if it is caramel popcorn

But what if I am at the popcorn counter at a movie theatre and find a few pieces of caramel has accidentally slipped into my packaged popcorn, and no one can work out the percentages? Hang on, the seller might say, its five percent for 332 of these pieces, then another 12 percent for the package (but since there's no label, let's make it 10 percent?) and 18 percent for the remaining 23 pieces. Or is it the other way around. Meanwhile, the movie is in full swing, the hero has run around one tree and emerged from the back of another.

Or, having been allowed in after working out the higher mathematics, I watch the movie with my heart thumping in case a bureaucrat-accountant-cop noticed any discrepancy and decided to do his patriotic duty by arresting me? This is not what the scientists mean when they say popcorn isn't good for you, salted, sugared, packaged or labelled.

Popcorn has been my companion at the movies for years. Sadly, then, farewell friend. A 100 percent goodbye it is.

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 6, 1975

Congress Wins Nine Seats in Mercara Civil Poll

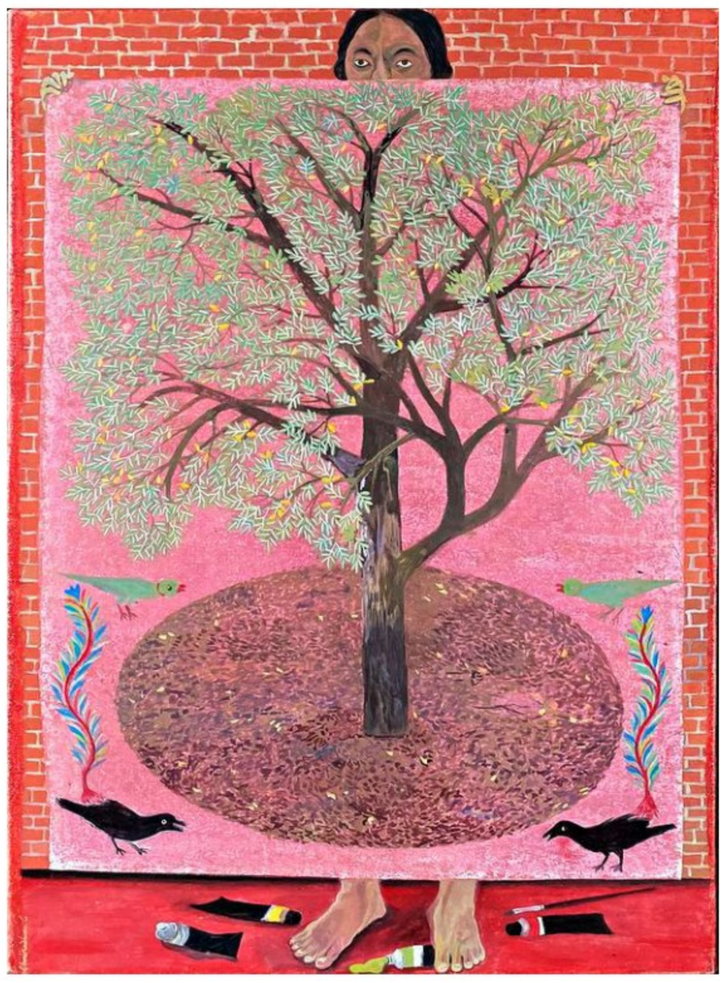
Mercara: The Congress has captured nine seats out of 15 in the elections to the Mercana Municipality held on Dec. 22. Congress-O secured four seats and the Jan Sangh two. Fiftytwo candidates contested the elections and nine lost their deposits. Forty Eight percent votes were polled. The elected candidates are Messrs. T.V. Varadaraj Naidu, D.S. Deva Setty, V.R. Ashwathnarayana (I Block) M.A. Nissar, M.B. Povanna, K.D. Bopaiah (II Block), M.C. Nanaiah, V.N. subbaiah and Smt. Vdavati Anantha (III Block), Mr. T.K.Changappa Smt. Gangamma Bopaiah and Mr. A.Chelivaiah (IV Block), Messrs. C.V. Sadasivarao, T.John, N.C. Thimmaiah (V Block).

Plea for Permanent Exhibition Building

Bangalore: Mr. K.H. Patil, KPCC president today sought the help and cooperation of the Government for constructing a permanent exhibition building, at Subhash Nagar.

Presiding over the Bhoomi Pooja function for this year's Congress exhibition, Mr. Patil said all endeavour should be made to make the show both educative and instructive.

The Central Government, State Governments and various public sector and private sector industries and commercial establishments would be taking part in the exhibition.



Joint venture Earth tones and agrarian settings dominate Unnikrishnan's work, while Devu Nenmara's canvases almost seem joyously impulsive.
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A chance to build a dream

Me, Amma, We, an exhibition of works by artist Unnikrishnan C and his mother Devu Nenmara, is currently underway in the city

Ruth Dhanaraj

More often than not, rags-to-riches stories leave readers inspired, but in the case of artist Unnikrishnan C, stronger emotions are stirred. Hailing from Nemmara in Kerala's Palakkad, the artist is exhibiting his works as well as those painted by his mother, Devu Nenmara, at Gallery Sumukha in the city, and how they got there is nothing short of incredible.

"I was always good at art. That was something I knew about myself when I was in class , but I never thought it could be a life choice," says Unnikrishnan, talking from his home in Kerala. For a son of daily wage earners, a career in the creative field was out of thequestion. Unnikrishnan admits he was in high school before he even heard of a Fine Arts course.

"It was my art teacher, Sushma Devi, who saw my potential and urged me to pursue Fine Arts. She had graduated with a Fine Arts degree and would share what she had learnt. It fuelled my desire to study the same, but my parents were not supportive of this idea and I don't blame them as I wasn't good in any school subject, except for art. Besides, in my family none of us had studied past class X."

Unnikrishnan too, may have stopped his studies at high school level if a class XII certificate was not one of the criteria to enroll for Fine Arts, which he eventually did at the Government College of Fine Arts Thrissur. "I honestly wasn't too keen on studying but a desire to join a Fine Arts course and become an artist, kept me going," he says, adding, that when he placed 10th at the entrance exam that year, there was no looking back thereafter.

Throughout his studies, Unnikrishnan would supplement the family income by taking up blue-collar jobs. He recollects how during a semester break, he was back home weighed down by the family's struggles. "I felt the walls closing in on me as if to hear me pour out my problems and take them in. From that day on, I began to paint on each brick until by the time I reached final year the interior of our house was covered with art work."

Unnikrishnan says he shared this with his mentor, Kavita Balakrishnan, who taught art history at college and she included this work as a video submission for an exhibition she was holding in Chennai. He replicated a similar work in college as part of his final year assessment

> "I felt the walls closing in on me as if to hear me pour out my problems and take them in.
> UNNIKRISHNAN

where it was appreciated by Jitish Kallat and Bose Krishnamachari who included it at the Kochi-Muziris Biennale in 2014.

He was one of the youngest artists featured at the Biennale that year and that proved to be the turning point in Unnikrishnan's life. His works at the Kochi Biennale earned him an invitation to the Sharjah Biennale in 2015 and so on until he had his first solo show in Switzerland hosted by art collector Richard Bloom in 2018.

Home sweet home

Devu watched all these happenings unfold in her son's life, first with a sense of apprehension that was followed by acceptance, and much later, understanding. "In the beginning I wondered what my son would gain by studying art, if it would benefit him in any way, but I was also glad he had found something that made him happy. There is no point forcing a child to study what they are not interested in. His teacher too, was quite sure of his talent and she encouraged me," says 62-year-old Devu.

Unnikrishnan had opened a small studio in his home-town to continue his art practice and also give underprivileged children a space to explore their creativity. During the pandemic, he shared his paints with family members, urging them to paint so as to take their minds off the looming uncertainty.

"That was when my mother began to draw a bit; she would watch me paint after she'd get back home from work in the evenings," he recollects.

"Art supplies are hard to come by and I had kept aside some dried gouache paints to use later. My mother found those, softened them with water and began to paint on some paper. At first I thought it was passing curiosity, but then she began to regularly work on creating something, after her day's work was done."

"I never knew she could draw and was excited to see her at work. Before I knew it, she was creating bigger works and I could see she was narrating her life stories through them," he says, adding that her copious use of colours reflected her emotions.

"I was just happy he was by my side and we were painting together," says Devu, who adds that Unnikrishnan did not interfere with her way of working.

"Whether it is my mother or my students, I believe Art cannot be taught. It comes from within and all we can do is provide a chance, a situation for it to be expressed," says the 35-year-old artist.

Me, Amma, We

While Unnikrishnan was in talks with Gallery Sumukha for his show, he did not tell his mother he intended to include her works as well. "I wanted her to paint as she always did, enjoying herself without any hindrance or restriction."

However, when 'Me, Amma, We' opened at Sumukha, Devu was present. It was her second trip outside Kerala, the first was for one of Unnikrishnan's shows in Hyderabad in late 2024. Needless to say, she was overjoyed to see her works mounted on a gallery's walls.

While Unnikrishnan prefers gouache paints, Devu uses acrylic which is a quick drying medium, something she needs in the midst of her busy schedule.

Visitors to the show will see earth tones and agrarian settings dominate Unnikrishnan's work, while Devu's canvases are marked by a burst of colour that almost seem joyously impulsive.

Grain spread out to dry on mats, brick wall backgrounds and similar scenes, share the walls with forest scenes where the foliage is a reflection of the Creator's palette.

Me, Amma, We is on display at Gallery Sumukha till January 11, 2025.

Weavers, warp and weft

Priyamedha Dutta

"Fashion for me is my religion, it is in my blood, nerves and cells of my body," says Hyderabad-based fashion designer Shravan Kummar, who was recently in Bengaluru to showcase his latest collection.

Titled 'Banglore to Belgium – tassels, threads and tradition', the collection that was unveiled at the prelaunch of Indian Craft Brewery (ICB), saw Ilkal embroidery from Karnataka as well as Mata ni Pachedi, a traditional form of textile art from Gujarat and a lot of Banarasi fabrics.

"From the timeless grandeur of Banaras and Karnataka's Ilkal to the storytelling art of Mata ni Pachedi and Kalamkari, our ethically handwoven fabrics pay homage to centuries of craftsmanship. Each piece is a seamless fusion of tradition and contemporary luxury, crafted to resonate with the modern global aesthetic," says Shravan.

Spinning designs The sari is the most forgiving garment, says Shravan Kummar.
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"These are saris that can be worn on boots and hot pants. My motto is 'wear a sari, save a weaver'. Even if I fashion a lehenga today, I will make it out of a sari so weavers find work," he adds.

For Shravan, showcasing his collection at the ICB was symbolic as this collaboration was a seamless blend of two visionaries committed to reviving India's heritage while embracing innovation.

"ICB, with its journey of bringing crafted beers from Belgium to Bengaluru, mirrors the spirit of Yatra."

Origin story

Shravan, who was to have been a doctor, armed himself with a postgraduate from the London School of Fashion Designing from where he learned colour psychology and fashion psychology, "I returned and wanted to revive that here." Ever since he started out as a designer in 1996, with his sister Jyothi Jaisooria, Shravan has been an advocate for weavers.

"I work with as many as 3,800 widows in and around India; we give them the *charkha*, and they spin khadi for us."

"Unfortunately in our country, a lot of weavers do not get the compensation they deserve, because there are so many middlemen involved and they end up being exploited," he says.

Shravan believes that even though the government has been working for the benefit of weavers, a lot more needs to be done. "The government has provided them with accessibility and subsidies, but I believe they have not been properly utilised or promoted."

He also pointed out that it is the people who should make choices when buying a garment.

"If you spend five days weaving a sari and try to sell it for ₹1700 in the market, most buyers would haggle to reduce its price, something they wouldn't do at a high end retail store."

Choices galore

For Shravan, the sari is the centrepiece of all his collections.

"A sari is the most forgiving garment – from a woman who is nine months pregnant, to a woman who has lost 40 kilograms – it looks good on everyone. Kanjivaram, Mangalgiri, Gadwal – India is home to more than 900 different types of saris, and there is no dearth to the myriad ways it can be draped."

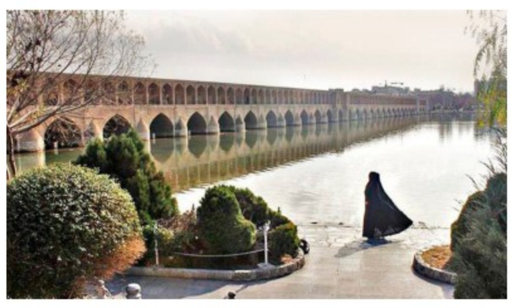
Talking about some of the underrated textiles of India, he adds, "There are so many weaves people are not aware of. For instance, there is the Baluchari from the Bishnupur district of West Bengal and the morangfai saris of Assam. Many don't even know if saris come from Nagaland or the north-eastern belt."

Shravan, who is known for his work in reviving old textiles, shared a tip on how to care for old saris.

"Tie up a few pepper pods and cloves in a breathable fabric such as mulmul and place it among your silk saris; it will keep cloth termites away."

Summing up his journey as a designer over the past 24 years, he says, "I do not think I have honestly done much; there is a lot more to learn on this subject."

CITYBEATS



Screen time

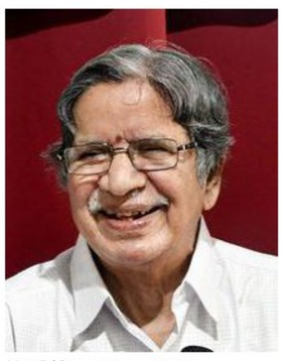
JANUARY 9
Vikalp Bengaluru in collaboration with Bangalore International Centre, will present the screening of the film *And, Towards Happy Alleys*.
The 75-minute film is directed and produced by Sreemoyee Singh, a filmmaker from Kolkata and also a recipient of the Golden Globe Foundation Residency for International Filmmakers in Los Angeles (February-March 2024).
At BIC, 6.30pm.
Details on BIC home page.

A sour moment

ONGOING
Si Nonna's, known for its sourdough Neapolitan pizzas, launches three new outlets in Bengaluru. The pizzas are crafted using a 48-hour fermentation process that results in a soft, airy crust. It comes in the options of classic vegetarian, vibrant vegan, chicken, pork and more. Also available are starters like eggplant parmigiana and beverages. *At Si Nonna's, St Marks Square, Koramangala, Utopia (Mahadevapura).*

Well-known writer Na. D'Souza dead

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA


Na. D'Souza FILE PHOTO

Well-known novelist Na. D'Souza, a voice for the people of Malnad region, died in Mangaluru on Sunday. He was 87.

Mr. D'Souza, a resident of Sagar in Shivamogga district, was admitted to Father Muller Hospital in Mangaluru for treatment.

He had been suffering from old age related health issues for the past few days.

The writer died around 8 p.m., according to family sources in Sagar.

He is survived by wife, Philomena, and three children.

The mortal remains of the writer will be brought to Sagar on Monday, and the final rites will be held on Tuesday.

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PWD employee

Mr. D'Souza was born in Sagar in 1937. He studied in Shivamogga and joined the Department of Public Works as a typist in 1959.

His literary career spanned over 60 years. He chose subjects for his novels from the world around him.

As an employee with the Public Works Department, he understood the problems of the people who were affected by the Sharavathi Valley Hydel Power Project, and wrote the novel *Mulugade*.

Similarly, he responded to the Kagodu Satyagraha in favour tenant farmers, through another novel *Kolaga*.

Agitations

Besides creative writing, he was actively involved in agitations concerning people of Malnad. He took the lead in protesting the State government's proposal to divert the Sharavathi to fulfil the drinking water needs of Bengalureans in 2019.

Literary output

He penned over 40 novels, many short stories, plays and stories for children as well.

He presided over the 80th Kannada Sahitya Sammelana in Madikeri in 2014.

His works, including *Kadina Benki, Dweepa, Baluvali*, and *Antarya* have been adapted to the silver screen.

The film, *Dweepa,* directed by Girish Kasaravalli, received wide appreciation.

Mr. D'Souza was honoured with many awards, including the Karnataka government's Pampa Award.

Revanth appeals to Telugu NRIs to invest in Telangana

The CM talks about a plan, 'Telangana Rising', for the State's development by 2050; the Telugu States of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh must compete in ushering in development, he adds

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Reaching out: A. Revanth Reddy at the 12th conclave of the World Telugu Federation in Hyderabad on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has invited Telugus settled in different parts of the globe to invest in the State and cooperate in its development.

The State government has prepared a comprehensive plan named 'Telangana Rising' as a roadmap for the all-round development of the State by 2050. Simultaneously, steps have been launched to develop the proposed Future City with facilities better than leading global cities.

Mr. Reddy was addressing participants of the 12th conclave of the World Telugu Federation here on Sunday. He wished that the two Telugu States, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, competed in ushering in development for setting up facilities on a global scale.

The Chief Minister expressed happiness over his participation in the meeting of the World Telugu Federation, which was started by former Chief Minister of united Andhra Pradesh N.T. Rama Rao three decades ago. He said that Telugu-speaking population is the second largest in the country next only to Hindi.

He exhorted Telugu people who excelled in political, film and business sectors not to forget their roots and language, asserting that they should inculcate knowledge about the language and respect it. In this context, he said the State government was working out modalities to issue official orders in both English and Telugu.

Elephant tramples tribal man in Kerala

The Hindu Bureau
MALAPPURAM

A 35-year-old man from the Cholanaikar tribe living inside the Nilambur forests in Kerala was trampled to death by an elephant on Saturday night, triggering violent protests. The elephant charged at Mani, who is from Poochappara hamlet at Mancheeri, while he was returning home after dropping his children.

Activists of the Democratic Movement of Kerala (DMK) took out a protest march to the forest office at Nilambur alleging a lackadaisical approach by the authorities. The protesters vandalised the furniture and windows of Divisional Forest Office office. They then marched to the hospital where Mani's body was kept.

The government has announced an assistance of ₹10 lakh to Mani's family.

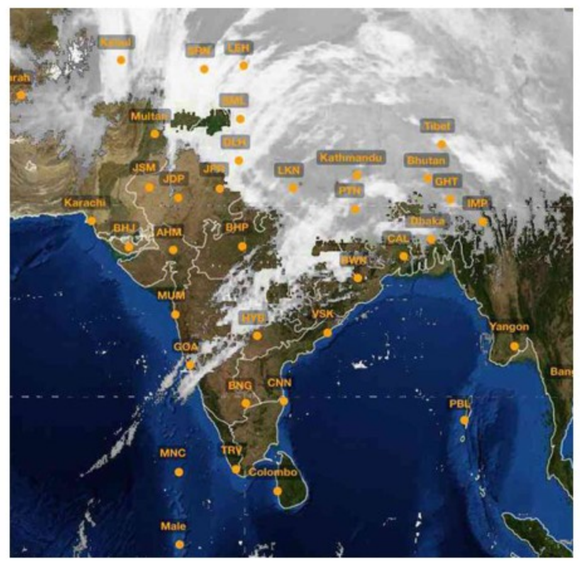
Nine fishers go missing at sea, kin seek rescue efforts

The Hindu Bureau
NAGAPATTINAM

Nine fishermen, who put out to sea from Pattinacherry village near Nagore on December 29, have gone missing. Selvamani, 42, along with eight others ventured into the sea on a mechanised boat from Akkaraipettai fishing harbour. When the boat reportedly broke down. Selvamani alerted the Nagapattinam Fisheries Department through a walkie-talkie, and three mechanised boats from Nagapattinam and Pattinacherry were dispatched to rescue them. However, upon reaching the reported location, the rescuers neither found the boat nor the fishermen. Despite searching extensively, the rescue team was unable to trace the fishermen and their boat. Their family members have urged the State and Central governments to expedite rescue operations.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Heavy Rainfall very likely at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh. Dense fog very likely in Punjab, Haryana-Chandigarh-Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, West Bengal & Sikkim, Bihar, Jharkhand, Assam, Meghalaya and Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	30.0	15.0	Kozhikode	—	33.5	22.8
Ahmedabad	—	29.0	15.1	Kurnool	—	31.5	17.6
Aizawl	—	27.8	11.9	Lucknow	—	13.5	9.5
Allahabad	—	14.8	7.4	Madurai	—	30.5	21.3
Bengaluru	—	28.3	14.9	Mangaluru	—	32.0	20.0
Bhopal	—	28.4	9.6	Mumbai	—	30.5	21.4
Bhubaneswar	—	27.2	14.5	Mysuru	—	29.6	14.5
Chandigarh	—	18.8	8.4	New Delhi	—	17.0	9.0
Chennai	—	30.2	21.4	Patna	—	16.3	10.0
Coimbatore	—	29.9	19.2	Port Blair	—	30.4	23.2
Dehradun	—	24.6	4.8	Puducherry	—	30.7	20.7
Gangtok	—	15.5	7.9	Pune	—	34.2	15.6
Goa	—	—	—	Raipur	—	28.8	8.8
Guwahati	—	26.8	11.4	Ranchi	—	25.9	9.2
Hubballi	—	32.0	15.0	Shillong	—	19.4	7.5
Hyderabad	—	29.6	15.2	Shimla	—	22.3	10.8
Imphal	—	23.9	7.7	Srinagar	—	1.5	-2.5
Jaipur	—	20.7	11.0	Thiruvananthapuram	2.0	32.1	23.8
Kochi	—	31.2	22.6	Tiruchi	—	29.5	20.4
Kohima	—	17.0	5.2	Vijayawada	—	29.0	18.2
Kolkata	—	23.2	16.2	Visakhapatnam	—	28.9	19.4

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.29	100	.58	...199	...166	
Bengaluru	.15	..46	.37	...153	...103	
Chennai	.13	..18	.31	32	...118	
Delhi	.21	..00	102	...383	...302	
Hyderabad	...9	..31	.21	71	95	
Kolkata	...8	111	.41	...260	...164	
Lucknow	...5	..35	.55	...249	...199	
Mumbai	...9	..89	...6	...133	...124	
Pune	..—	272	.92	...184	...141	
Visakhapatnam	...8	..90	.39	...258	...196	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Delhi recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 339 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Aizawl, Mizoram, recorded a healthy AQI score of 21

Air Quality Code: Poor | Moderate | Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

THE HINDU

EDUCATIONPLUS

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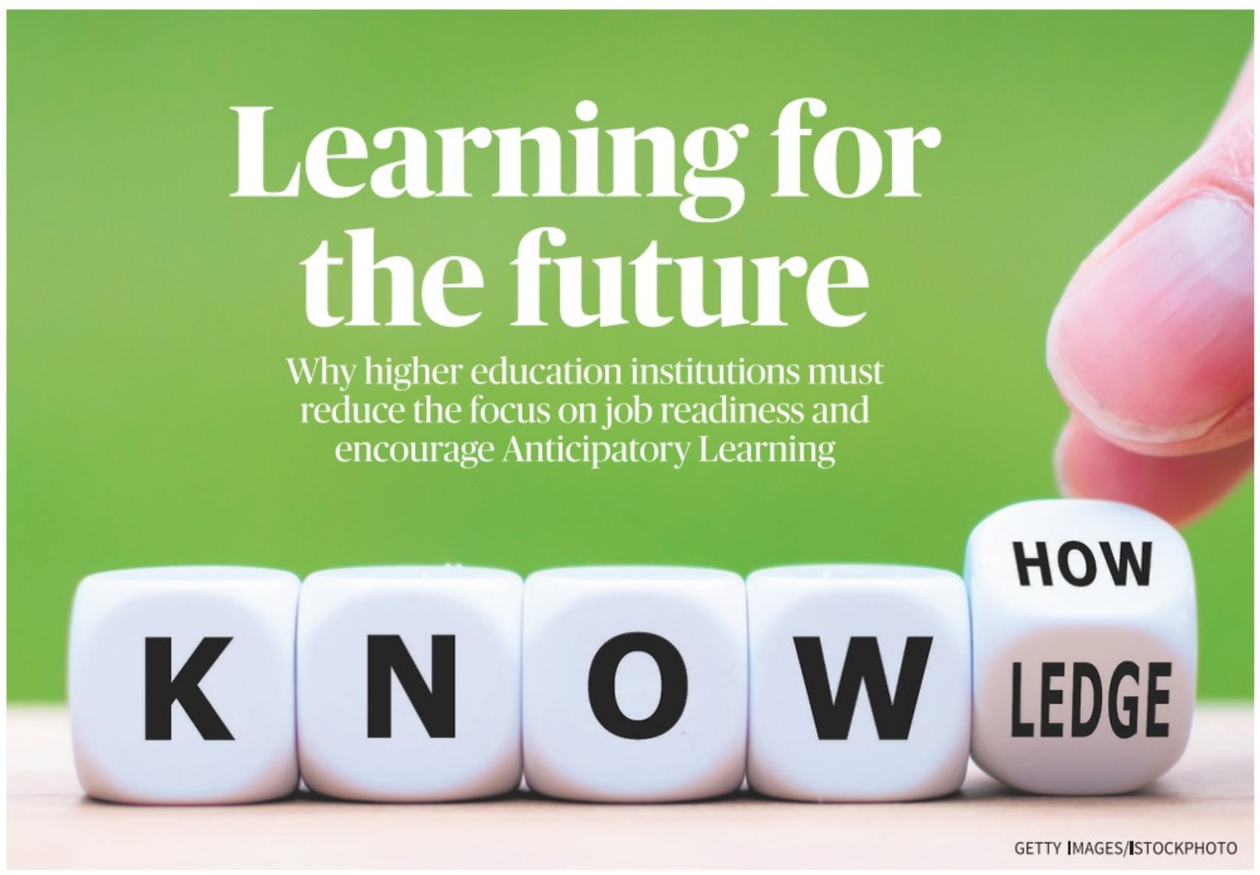
Learning for the future

Why higher education institutions must reduce the focus on job readiness and encourage Anticipatory Learning



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Salil Sahadevan

A college student is murdered on her birthday and enters a time loop, and repeats the same day over and over again. That is the storyline of the 2017 black comedy *Happy Death Day*. Many higher education providers find themselves stuck in a similar time loop, endlessly chasing current industry needs but never arriving. Job-specific skills can quickly become obsolete. The acceleration of AI intensifies this cycle. Do we need adaptable individuals who can make sense and create a future, or narrowly skilled workers to boost placement stats? If it is the former, then the traditional focus on immediate job readiness is ill placed.

Skilling, upskilling, and reskilling are essential and urgent. But the relentless focus on job readiness can put education in a reactive cycle. We do not want placement pressure to suppress curiosity and growth, leaving young people anxious and unfulfilled. Instead, we need individuals driven by purpose and a hunger to understand the complexities ahead. The true preparedness comes from three meta-skills: meta-cognitive agility, epistemic flexibility, and transdisciplinary fluency. Big words? Not so when you see them in action as new fluencies needed for the mind.

Transferable skills

A researcher zooming in and out of a mind map to explore alternative interpretations of methodologies or a musician developing a plan for targeted practice for challenging pieces both show meta-cognitive agility. A biology student, initially believing all life needs oxygen, encounters anaerobic life and revises his beliefs, showing epistemic flexibility. An architect designing a net-zero home for the elderly shows transdisciplinary fluency. These are the qualities of an anticipatory learner. These skills are job-independent and transferable.

Anticipatory learning is about encouraging students to develop the adaptability to thrive in the future by developing foresight and creating futures rather than simply reacting to current needs. In institutions, anticipatory learning shifts the focus from transactional models that just try to fill immediate skills gaps to transformative partnerships. These collaborations may rely on evolving policy support for flexible pathways, micro-credentials, context-specific industry linkages, flexible degree programmes, credit-based modular curricula, and hybrid learning. Using a blend of these, anticipatory learning prepares students for impactful careers, not immediate jobs.

Getting good grades is not a problem but thinking that schools exist just to give grade is definitely a problem.

Higher education institutions and the skilling ecosystem must also see the nature and content of jobs. In *Bullshit Jobs*, David Graeber argues that, despite technological progress, many roles are meaningless. He cites jobs like some receptionists and doormen who exist solely to make others look important, market lobbyists for harmful industries, workers fixing problems that should not exist such as glitches in poorly designed software, and taskmasters inventing unnecessary projects for others to complete. These are illusions of jobs that cause a lot of moral and spiritual damage. These should definitely not be the jobs for which our education needs to prepare students.

Beyond jobs

Many Western universities face pressure to reduce ties with companies engaged in fossil fuels, tobacco, and environmentally damaging practices. It is tricky to balance social responsibility with financial needs and tempting to be myopic. Industry readiness is important, but seeing education solely as job preparation turns learning into an echo chamber. Getting good grades is not a problem but thinking that schools exist just to give grade is definitely a problem. By avoiding such filter bubbles institutions can truly complement the employment ecosystem.

True learning happens when we are passionate about what we learn and free to explore our own interests. Higher education institutions can create this environment where industry readiness is a natural by-product that follows. Job readiness can be a powerful motivator in the short term, but it risks creating narrow, individualistic lives. This is not about rejecting becoming industry-ready but of looking at education only from that lens alone.

As technical skills quickly get dated, the very notion of job readiness is limiting. Educational institutions exist to encourage self-discovery and a sense of wonder. Finding connections, understanding problems, building solutions, and being socially responsible are all outcomes of that discovery and wonder. Anticipatory learning can strike the balance by combining personal growth with career skills to help create more meaningful work. We have more options for organising society and jobs than we realise. So, is it too idealistic to ask for this from all of us?

Views expressed are personal.

The writer is Deputy Secretary, University Grants Commission.

No Detention?

With the Centre having done away with the "no-detention" policy for Classes 5 and 8, The Hindu is hosting a webinar on the connection between no-detention and learning outcomes, how the various states have responded to the move and whether the new rules will help solve the problem of poor learning. The speakers are

Ratna Viswanathan, CEO, Reach to Teach; **K.R. Maalathi,** Founder and CEO, Auuro Educational Services; and **Jayanth R.,** Principal Correspondent, The Hindu. The session will be moderated by Ravina Warkad from The Hindu's Education section.

When: January 11, 4.00 pm

To register, visit https://t.ly/wQpwq or scan the QR code.

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For more articles, columns and news on admissions, new courses and events in schools and colleges, visit: www.thehindu.com/education

No secret affair

Deliberations on draft Digital Personal Data Protection Rules must be open

The draft Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, 2025, is a long overdue advance in the direction of enforcing the fundamental right to informational privacy for Indians, affirmed by the Supreme Court of India in the landmark case, *Justice K.S. Puttaswamy vs. Union of India* (2017). The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, which these draft rules seek to enforce, was passed in Parliament over a year ago. This seven-year wait has most likely not been without costs for the privacy of the data of Indians, as it coincided with a period that saw a rapid growth in digitisation. The proposed rules offer direction on how online services will be required to: communicate the purposes of their data collection to users; safeguard children's data online; establish the Data Protection Board of India (DPBI); set the standards for government agencies to follow to be exempt from the Act's provisions, and spell out the procedures to be observed if personal data is breached by a data fiduciary. The concerns regarding the proposed DPBI's institutional design have not been resolved by these proposed Rules, and it may not be realistic to expect such an outcome from subordinate legislation.

It is regrettable that the government continues to cloak the rule-making process of a critical policy such as this in secrecy. Since the Justice B.N. Srikrishna committee was convened to draft the first Bill for data protection, the government has consistently declined to place recommendations from stakeholders in the public domain, and has foreclosed such disclosure for these draft rules as well. For legislation where the stakes are high for individual users as well as for large technology firms, an open deliberative process is essential. It can only be facilitated when industry associations and the general public can find equal footing by being equal participants with transparency into each other's viewpoints during the consultation process. In the short and medium term, it is essential for the government to proceed with these principles in mind, while never departing from the key aims of any data protection law: minimising data collection, promoting disclosures, penalising neglect in protecting user data, and discouraging surveillance practices, both by the private sector and the government. This process must also play out in a timely fashion, as Indians have been waiting far too long to finally obtain the rights that were affirmed for them in 2017. Else, people's confidence in the government's seriousness about protecting their data from government agencies as well as private enterprises would be shaken.

Nothing alarming

Reports of many HMPV cases in China reflect heightened surveillance

Five years after the SARS-CoV-2 virus overwhelmed hospitals in Wuhan, China, acute respiratory diseases caused by viruses including the human metapneumovirus (HMPV) in children and the elderly, and influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), are increasing in the country, especially in its northern provinces. However, the sharp rise in acute respiratory diseases is not unusual during this time of the year, and as per a Chinese official, the overall number of cases in 2024 would be "smaller" than in 2023. Surprisingly, while the World Health Organization and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have not raised a red flag so far and there is almost nil reporting in the international media, the Indian media is awash with reports of an HMPV "outbreak" in China. A recent meeting of the Joint Monitoring Group under the aegis of the Union Health Ministry noted that the situation in China is "not unusual in view of the ongoing flu season", and the "usual pathogens that are expected during the season" are causing the present surge in respiratory diseases. The HMPV virus was first identified in children in 2001 in the Netherlands. Infection with HMPV usually occurs by the age of five years with reinfection occurring throughout life as immune protection induced by the virus is too weak to prevent repeated infections. The virus causes upper and/or lower respiratory tract infections, with lower respiratory tract infections being among the most common. While the virus often causes only mild disease, it can lead to severe illness requiring hospitalisation in children, immunocompromised populations and the elderly.

Globally, 3%-10% of hospital admissions and 1% of acute lower respiratory infection-related deaths in children under age five in 2018 are attributed to HMPV, as per a 2021 paper. The study also found that children younger than six months, especially those in low- and lower-middle-income countries, are at greater risk of death caused by the HMPV virus. Detection of a large number of HMPV cases among children aged less than 14 years in China is a reflection of the heightened surveillance and testing for the virus. On the contrary, India does not have any approved inexpensive tests that are widely available for diagnosing the virus. When testing for HMPV in patients with acute respiratory disease should be routine, as the virus has been in circulation for years globally, including India, and fatality is 1% in young children, India is only now expanding the number of laboratories testing for HMPV beyond the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) network due to the spike in HMPV cases in China. What is also urgently needed is a regulatory framework that facilitates a rapid approval of diagnostic tests in the context of local and global outbreaks of novel and less known pathogens.

The outlook for India in the year ahead

M.K. Narayanan

a former Director, Intelligence Bureau, a former National Security Adviser, and a former Governor of West Bengal

India is at a pivotal moment in its history. It is among the leading nations in the world when it comes to economic growth and political stability. India today projects an atmosphere of peace, which is seemingly out of place in a world that is undergoing a profound shift in its economic and geo-political landscape. India is today privy to the rise of new economic and political groupings.

The year 2024 was a period of pronounced political uncertainty across the globe. Much of the world was a mute witness to the multiple and concurrent conflicts that threaten peace and stability today. This is specially true of Europe and West Asia.

One major tragedy still unfolding is Gaza, which has few parallels, while the ongoing Ukraine conflict contains the seeds of a much wider conflict in the future. India has, however, managed to steer itself successfully within this geo-political landscape.

A year of new troubles

This may, however, be too good to last. The year 2025 seems poised to bring in a host of fresh troubles that will require deft handling on the part of India's policymakers. At this time, it might, hence, be wise for India's leaders to heed the message contained in an ancient Chinese saying that says 'the wind sweeping through the tower heralds a rising storm in the mountain'.

I begin by assessing the situation with India's largest neighbour, China. Much is being made of the recent border negotiations and an apparent disengagement at the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh. This was followed by the first formal meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and China's President Xi Jinping meeting in five years, as well as the resumption of the Special Representatives' talks on border issues. Wiser heads would know that disengagement does not mean 'dispute resolution'. The border conflict still remains alive and unchanged. Far more needs to be done to reach any kind of détente. India, hence, cannot afford to 'take its eye off the ball'.

Meanwhile, China has, of late, taken a series of steps to strengthen security cooperation with nations of the Global South, which are aimed at outflanking India. It recently facilitated reconciliation talks that were held in Beijing among various Palestine factions. In September last year, China and African nations jointly agreed to progress the China-sponsored Global Security Initiative (GSI) and deepen cooperation in areas such as counter terrorism, disaster management and public health.

China also managed to steal a march over India during the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit held in Pakistan in October. It took full advantage of the absence of the Indian Prime Minister at the Summit to mute India's voice at a forum that is perceived as being anti-West. Mr. Xi again took full advantage of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit, in Peru in November, to strengthen ties with 'traditional enemy', Japan.

Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba has since agreed with Mr. Xi to promote a 'mutually beneficial relationship ...based on common strategic interests'.

> While 2024 saw political uncertainty across the globe, 2025 will require deft handling by India's policymakers

The churn in South and West Asia

It is in India's traditional area of influence, *viz.*, South Asia, however, that the biggest churn is taking place – or has already taken place. Questions have been raised after the ouster of the Sheikh Hasina regime in Bangladesh as to whether India indeed has a proper 'neighbourhood policy'. Today, India appears almost isolated in the region and with the eclipse of Ms. Hasina and the emergence of a caretaker regime (which is openly hostile to India), India appears friendless.

Both Nepal and Sri Lanka today appear to look like 'fair weather friends' – at least in so far as the present is concerned. Where the Maldives stands, is indeed a subject to debate. Pakistan has always been inimical to India, and Afghanistan today does not seem to figure prominently in India's calculations. Bhutan, under the present King, does not display the same warmth towards India, appearing more intent on balancing relations with China. Across the South Asia region, therefore, how the roll of the dice would turn out is a matter of speculation.

Far more problematic though could well be the impact of the current churn in West Asia, more specifically, the developments in Syria of late. The ouster of the Assad regime in Syria is certain to have a cataclysmic impact on that part of the world. In turn, it will have relevance for countries in the wider region as well, including India. How India deals with the situation resulting from the collapse of the erstwhile Bashar al-Assad regime, and the takeover of the reins by a Sunni group. the 'Hayat Tahir al Shams (HTS)' is unclear. Its leader, who carried the nom-de-guerre Abu Mohammed al Julani, has since reverted to his real name, Ahmed Hussain al Sharaa. The HTS leader was previously linked to al Qaeda, and even briefly flirted with the Islamic State (ISIS), but is today displaying a more moderate outlook. It may, however, be too early to determine what the outlook for Syria is, and for the region as a whole under the new dispensation.

The HTS was able to wage a successful offensive against the Assad regime largely because it could identify with the Sunni majority in Syria, in contrast to the Assad regime that had, of late, become more reliant on Russia and Iran to maintain its hold over the country. From India's viewpoint, the Assad family (belonging to Syria's Alawite group, a minority sect of Shia Islam) was initially viewed as a stabilising force in the Gulf region, especially during the difficult days that rocked parts of West Asia in the wake of the Arab Spring. India, home to a Shia and Sunni population, had greatly welcomed this. More recently, many of these perceptions had altered.

The implications of a Sunni regime in Syria are certain to be widespread. One by one, elements of the so-called 'axis of resistance' are being dismantled. On the other hand Israel, despite its pogrom in Gaza, seems to be gaining the upper hand in West Asia. Which side has gained the most, given recent developments in Syria, is not yet fully clear, but quite evidently, Iran has been a loser – and it might well result in Iran's influence across West Asia declining. It may also no longer be the same revolutionary force in West Asia, that it was perceived to be following the 1979 revolution in Iran. The Ayatollahs in Iran are also set to face a major setback, and a major churn in Iran cannot be ruled out. The Shia world as a whole would, thus, be the overall loser, and militias such as the Hezbollah could well be cut to size.

Implicitly, the pro-Palestine movement would be adversely affected and Palestine may not persist as a live issue. Global jihad could also face a deathblow.

The biggest gainers will in all likelihood be Israel and Türkiye. Russia's influence has suffered with the fall of the Assad regime. But given Russia's relations with Türkiye's strongman, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and the pragmatic approach taken by Russian President Vladimir Putin, Russia could well retrieve the situation.

Do not rule out the digital threat

In conclusion, it needs to be mentioned that notwithstanding the developments in the geo-political arena, it is the digital threat that is set to achieve a quantum leap during 2025. The situation warrants careful assessment and sending out of a dire warning about the dangers present in the digital arena. Some of this was evident during the latter part of 2024, but this is likely to grow exponentially during 2025. Convergence among technologies is threatening national infrastructure in a manner that had never previously been envisaged. According to data available with Agencies, there was a dramatic rise in cyber attacks occurring in India in the recent period. Almost all major companies and Government institutions were hit by denial of service and ransomware attacks. All this is set to increase in geometrical progression during 2025 and the following years.

Symbolism must not become misplaced showmanship

Air Vice Marshal Manmohan Bahadur (retired)

former Additional Director General, Centre for Air Power Studies

Symbols have an intangible value as they represent some important facets of life. Leaders use the resulting symbolism smartly to message their views. It is for this reason that the recent removal of a painting, a symbol of an iconic moment in modern India's military history, from the Indian Army Chief's office complex, in New Delhi, generated a nationwide surge of emotions.

The painting, of the surrender of the Pakistani Army to India in the 1971 war, has been relocated to a conference centre named after Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw. But the incident highlights the importance of valuing symbols for their quality and effect; this is vital, considering the ongoing 'drive' in the military to induct-in learnings that are connected to a distant past. In this drive it must be remembered that history is truth, taken as a whole, and any segmented adoption will lead to skewed learning.

As the dust settles on the angst raised by the removal of the painting, some facets of symbols and the associated symbolism need evaluation. Five important ones stand out – identity, leadership, direction, faith and competency. A few examples would suffice.

Other examples

When Israel was established, the swearing-in of military recruits took place after a gruelling desert march to Fort Masada where they took a vow to protect their country. It symbolised a 'never give in' attitude born from the spirit of a group of 960 Jews who, in 73 CE, fought to the end against the Romans. 'Masada' has become a symbol of the identity of an Israeli soldier.

On April 17, 2012, *The Washington Post* wrote: "An aerial art show pulled thousands of Washingtonians out of their offices, vehicles and homes on Tuesday morning [April 17] as NASA'S space shuttle Discovery blew into town atop a modified 747, the battered space veteran taking a final victory jaunt [after finishing its useful life] before landing at Dulles International Airport... There were costumes, there were cheers and, of course, there were tears." That 'flypast' was symbolic of national pride in the leadership position of the American space programme.

> The controversy over the removal of the iconic 1971 war painting highlights the importance of valuing symbols for their quality and effect

Sometimes, leaders remind themselves of the import of their position. U.S. President Harry S. Truman had a table placard that read, 'The Buck Stops Here'. And, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had the famous lines of 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening' by Robert Frost on his table: 'The woods are lovely dark and deep, but I have promises to keep, And miles to go before I sleep, and miles to go before I sleep.' They were reminders to the two heads of state but, symbolically, had another purpose – the 'knowledge' of the positioning of these placards on the leader's desk was a subtle direction to their countrymen of their duty too.

Duty is visible, in a unique way, at the Base Camp of Siachen Glacier (the highest battlefield in the world) where there is a shrine of 'OP Baba'. Who O.P. Baba was is not known but the tale of him beating back the enemy, single handed, at Malaum post is legendary. The battalion moving up the Glacier reports to the Baba and seeks his blessings for a safe time on the treacherous glacier.

On its de-induction, the battalion reports to him again and thanks him. O.P. Baba, thus, is a symbol of faith in the almighty by soldiers of all religions and a conviction that all will be well.

The importance of 1971

In independent India's history, December 16, 1971 is a red-letter day when India won a resounding victory against Pakistan. Measured against any parameter, the painting of the surrender ceremony is iconic and has come to represent the pinnacle of India's military and political competency. For sure all services were deeply involved but it was the Army jawan who led the foray, resulting in the surrender of 93,000 Pakistani soldiers. The iconic scene is seared in the memories of all Indians – and, rightly so, a huge blow-up adorned a room in the Army Chief's office complex. It is where the Army Chief meets heads of foreign armed forces and dignitaries and the message each one of them would have carried would have been of India's, and the Indian Army's, finest hour. The replacement painting (whose quality is debatable) is touted to represent the future vision of the Indian Army – in a way it is a toss-up between a subtle communication of a spectacular politico-military success and that of an imagined future.

Which is more suited to be in the Indian Army Chief's office? Well, one cannot dictate how someone furnishes his office – one can only have an opinion. But would the painting have a view? Alas, if only it could speak.

The statue in Ladakh

The post script. Even as the controversy over the removal of the painting seemed to ebb there is another one now, raised by the recent installation of Shivaji's statue on the shores of the frigid Pangong Tso (lake) in Eastern Ladakh. There have been disapproving views, including those by the local councillor, of an inappropriate choice having been made. Having operated extensively in the area, one cannot but rue the fact that if any symbol was required to link valour with local history, it should have been that of Zorawar Singh, the legendary Dogra general, whose forays took him deep into Tibet. Symbolism is about linking the viewer to a 'feel' that he can connect with in his surroundings. Else, it is misplaced showmanship.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Mega project for Nicobar

The report, "Cruise terminal proposed for Great Nicobar Island" (January 5), was disturbing to read. The ecologically super-sensitive islands will be subject to destruction. The endemic flora and fauna can never get replaced. The island is of strategic importance in terms of our maritime security. Hence, the activities here should only be for those that concern our defence forces. There seem to be overenthusiastic officials in Delhi who should heed the word of caution and the points being raised by the local senior officials.

B. Sundar Raman,
Coimbatore

The shady manner in which the central government is attempting to implement its much-trumpeted '₹72,000 crore mega-infrastructre project' will result in catastrophic consequences. It is hoped that the National Green Tribunal will deter the government from implementing the project. This is a moment for environmentalists, scientists and environmental advocates to come together, make this issue a rallying point, and thwart the government's attempt by launching a "Save Nicobar" mass movement.

T.N. Venugopalan,
Kochi

Meet farmers, start talks

The farmers' protest has rekindled memories of the year-long agitation, during 2020-21, near Delhi's borders. The protest now is for the legitimate demand by farmers on MSP and a waiver of loans. The government should begin talks with representatives of all *kisan* organisations to resolve their long-pending demands.

S.K. Khosla,
Chandigarh

The MSP for key agricultural commodities has been a persistent sticking point in the negotiations between the government and the farmers. Indian farmers' problems have worsened as farm incomes have been squeezed by slower output growth, higher costs and increased vulnerability to climate change. There is basically a lack of understanding of what agriculture needs. Above all, there is a lack of political commitment to ensure remunerative prices to farmers.

R. Sivakumar,
Chennai

In Sydney

The Border-Gavaskar Trophy lived up to its name. The two powerhouses in the game fought hard and, the better team won. This series will mark the end of many eras and also the start of new ones. The record attendance during the matches ensures that Test cricket lives on.

Subash Balakrishnan,
Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the postal address.

India needs to prioritise preventive care

Sathya R. Sriram
CEO, Preventive Health, Apollo Hospitals

Akshay Ravi
Partner, Healthcare practice, EY Parthenon

India is facing a healthcare crisis that is growing both in scope and cost. We face an alarming dichotomy today: while life expectancy of Indians is expected to increase further, many are facing disease burden earlier. As the country sees an alarming rise in non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer, the financial burden on individuals and the healthcare system continues to escalate.

NCDs accounted for about 65% of all deaths in 2022, up from about 50% in 2010-13, as per the National Family Health Survey-5. The prevalence of risk factors for NCDs is worryingly high. One in four adult men are hypertensive. One in eight are diabetic. Further, breast, lung, and cervical cancer are on the rise, with the median age of diagnosis occurring earlier than global averages.

Millions of people who are facing these conditions could have been managed better, at often lower costs, had they been diagnosed earlier. In this context, shifting the focus from reactive treatment to proactive prevention is crucial, not only to improve health outcomes but also to control the ever-increasing healthcare expenses.

A growing economic burden

The Union Budget for 2024 allocated ₹87,657 crore to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, marking a 13% increase from the previous year. While this is a step forward, experts agree that this allocation remains insufficient given the scale of India's health challenges.

The National Health Accounts show the total current health expenditure estimate in 2021-22 as ₹7.9 lakh crore, growing at a rate more than overall inflation. The share of household health expenditure, including insurance contributions, while decreasing over time, still drives nearly 50%+ of the spend. This remains one of the highest globally.

The World Health Organization (WHO) projects that the economic burden of NCDs in India will surpass ₹280 lakh crore by 2030 – a cost equivalent to ₹2 lakh per household. This escalating cost, driven by rising healthcare expenses and productivity losses, poses a severe threat to financial stability, particularly for middle and lower-income families.

Regular screenings, especially for high-risk individuals, could significantly reduce the incidence of serious, life-threatening and debilitating conditions and its resultant cascading economic and social effects. In a large hospital network, for every 1,000 people screened, at least three people are identified for pre-emptive cardiac or cancer interventions.

Targeted but periodic screening investigations for individuals such as mammograms for breast cancer, pap smears for cervical cancer, X-ray or low-dose computed tomography for lung cancer, ultrasound for liver disease, echo cardiography and treadmill stress test for heart disease beyond the physical vitals and blood tests enable early intervention.

Unfortunately, comprehensive health checks (which can cost anywhere between ₹8,000 and ₹15,000 in metro cities today) are perceived as expensive. If the government were to enable a step change in preventive health services adoption, it could significantly reduce the overall financial burden on individuals and the healthcare system.

Tax incentives, subsidised screenings, and public awareness are key policy tools that can enable this. As part of the Finance Act, 2013, the Union government made efforts to encourage preventive healthcare by offering a ₹5,000 tax deduction under Section 80D of the Income Tax Act for health checks. However, this amount has remained stagnant for the last decade, despite the 12-14% estimated healthcare inflation rate and the rising cost of healthcare services. Thus, it would be prudent for our policymakers to consider revising the tax deduction limit to at least ₹15,000 in the Union Budget for 2025-26. This would incentivise more individuals to undergo preventive health checks, potentially saving the nation several thousand of crores ifn uture healthcare costs. The incremental tax foregone to the exchequer from such a measure is estimated to be less than ₹5,000 crore, a worthy investment towards improving the health of the nation.

The path forward

We need to prioritise preventive care to mitigate the increasing economic and financial burden of chronic diseases. A three-pronged approach can potentially drive a change in the adoption of preventive health services.

First, we need to strengthen early intervention capabilities through the Ayushman Health and Wellness Centres, including capturing trends effectively and enabling risk-driven targeted screening using AI-enabled imaging modalities to offer lower cost screenings at-scale.

Second, we need to improve the adoption of screening at private centres by encouraging insurers and private health providers to offer a subsidised minimum screening programme for every individual between 40-60 years. For example, for women after the age of 40, a mammogram is necessary annually or once in two years, based on her risk factors. Exploring part funding through allocations from proceeds from the healthcare cess or the proposed 35% GST slab on tobacco and sugar products can help reduce funding needs.

Finally, the increase in tax deduction limit can further incentivise people to complete comprehensive health checks.

By prioritising preventive care over reactive treatments, India can pave the way for a healthier and more economically resilient future.

A stampede, a rift, and a thaw

The tragedy exposes the fraught relationship between industry and government

STATE OF PLAY

R. Ravikanth Reddy
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The stampede at a special screening of the film, *Pushpa 2: The Rule*, at Hyderabad's Sandhya Theatre in early December 2024 following actor Allu Arjun's "surprise entry" and the events that followed it caused a rift between the Telangana government and sections of the Telugu film industry.

On December 4, a family of four – M. Revathi, her husband M. Bhaskar, and their son and daughter – had gone for the screening at the single-screen theatre. When the actor entered the premises, a stampede broke out and Revathi died. Her son is battling for life in hospital. Soon after the incident, a case was filed against Sandhya Theatre, Allu Arjun, and his security team.

At an event to celebrate the film's success on December 7, Allu Arjun thanked the Telangana and Andhra Pradesh governments for hiking the prices of tickets and said he was distressed by Revathi's death. On December 13, the Telangana police arrested the actor. The next day, the Telangana High Court granted him interim bail.

Many believe that the arrest was an act of political vendetta as Allu Arjun appeared to have forgotten Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's name at the event and mentioned it only after the audience shouted it out. It was this momentary lapse that landed him to jail, they allege.

Some Congress leaders believe that this was a deliberate act to undermine the Chief Minister's importance, especially since the actor had extended a special note of thanks to

the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Chandrababu Naidu.

Bharat Rashtra Samiti (BRS) working president K.T. Rama Rao added fuel to the fire by saying film stars who have taken concessions from the government cannot even recognise Mr. Reddy as the Chief Minister. A family member of Allu Arjun's revealed that Mr. Rama Rao's comments worsened matters and said that he should have refrained from using this episode to settle political scores.

In the Telangana Assembly, Mr. Reddy was forceful, asserting that the law applied equally to all citizens, irrespective of their status. He added that the law would take its course. He also said that the actor behaved irresponsibly when the police tried to arrest him. Mr. Reddy then lambasted the film industry for not responding to the woman's death, implying that the film industry and the Opposition appeared more sympathetic towards the actor than the woman's family.

Allu Arjun denied these allegations and said this was an instance of "character assassination". He added that he had not been informed by the police about Revathi's death.

With claims and counter claims flying thick and fast, and in order to debunk the actor's allegations, Hyderabad Police Commissioner C.V. Anand released a video of the police escorting the actor out of the theatre.

The Telangana government then announced that it would no longer allow special shows that provide a windfall to the producers. The decision, which caused concern among industry heads as many big-budget movies are awaiting release, further widened the rift between the State government and the film industry.

In the midst of this saga, Dil Raju, who was appointed Film Development Corporation chairman, said that he would bridge the gap between the industry and the government.

The relationship between the industry and political parties in Telangana is complicated. It goes back to the days of the agitation for Statehood when the BRS (then called the TRS) allegedly threatened the industry saying it would not allow professionals from Andhra Pradesh to operate freely in the new State. Later, the industry grew close to the BRS, especially with Mr. Rama Rao, say senior Ministers. This apparently angered the Congress, which had given land and tax incentives to the film industry soon after it had moved from Madras.

The first signs of a thaw were seen at a meeting between film industry heads and the Chief Minister on December 26. Mr. Reddy said the government stood with the film industry. He also said there would be no compromise on law and order and that celebrities are responsible for controlling fans. Meanwhile, Mr. Dil Raju dismissed the issue of special screenings as trivial and said that Mr. Reddy harbours a dream of making Hyderabad an international destination for film shootings.

While working on fulfilling that dream, the industry and the government must together ensure that no more lives are lost in incidents like these.

Sharp fall in Madrasa and unrecognised school enrolments

Officials attribute overall enrolment decline to deduplication, but disproportionate drops in certain schools need scrutiny

DATA POINT

Sambavi Parthasarathy
Vignesh Radhakrishnan

The number of students enrolled in Indian schools in 2023-24 declined by 1.22 crore compared with 2018-19, show data. Officials argue that Aadhaar numbers and unique student IDs have been used to identify beneficiaries of educational schemes and, in the process, duplicate entries and ghost entries have been weeded out.

However, Unified District Information System For Education Plus (UDISE) data show that this new method of data collection has had a disproportionate impact on Madrasas – both recognised and unrecognised – and other unrecognised schools. Unrecognised schools don't have a license to function and don't meet many of the criteria set by the government in terms of infrastructure, class size, etc. There was a sharp drop in school enrolments among recognised Madrasa schools even as the number of recognised Madrasas and the number of teachers working in them increased.

Chart 1 shows the absolute number of students enrolled in government, government-aided, private, and other schools in 2018-19 and 2023-24. Other schools include unrecognised schools and Madrasas (recognised and unrecognised). Student enrolments dropped from 13.1 crore to 12.7 crore in government schools, 2.7 crore to 2.5 crore in government-aided schools, 9.2 crore to 9 crore in private schools, and 90 lakh to 49 lakh in other schools.

Chart 2 shows the absolute drop in the number of students enrolled in 2023-24 compared with 2018-19 across school types. Enrolments dropped by 36 lakh in government schools, 24 lakh in government-aided schools, 21 lakh in private schools, and more than 40 lakh in other schools.

When read together, Charts 1 and 2 show that the number of students in other schools only formed around 2% to 4% of the total enrolments in both the years (Chart 1), but formed over 33% of the decline in total enrolments (Chart 2).

Calculating the decline in enrolments in percentage terms brings out the disparity further. **Chart 3** shows the percentage drop in student enrolments in 2023-24 compared with 2018-19 across school types. Enrolments declined by 2.8% in government schools, 8.7% in government-aided schools, 2.3% in private schools and 44.8% in other schools.

Chart 4 shows a break-up of student enrolments in other schools – separately for recognised Madrasas, unrecognised Madrasas, and other unrecognised schools – for 2023-24 and 2018-19. Enrolments dropped from 30 lakh to 25 lakh (16% decline) in recognised Madrasas, 6.1 lakh to 78,283 (87% decline) in unrecognised Madrasas, and 53 lakh to 23.5 lakh (56% decline) in other unrecognised schools.

Charts 5 and 6 show the absolute number of schools and teachers for school types presented in chart 4 for 2023-24 and 2018-19. In unrecognised Madrasas and other unrecognised schools, the number of schools and teachers has sharply reduced, which also explains the drop in students in them. However, the number of recognised Madrasa schools have increased by 7%, and the number of teachers in those schools have risen by 13% even though the student share has decreased by 16%.

So, there has been a disproportionate decrease in enrolments in Madrasas and unrecognised schools. Is this because duplicate entries and ghost entries were removed or was there an actual drop in students? It is important to explore this further especially since recognised Madrasas and the number of teachers working in them has increased despite a drop in student enrolments.

The case of missing students

The data for the charts were sourced from UDISE+ reports for 2018-19 and 2023-24

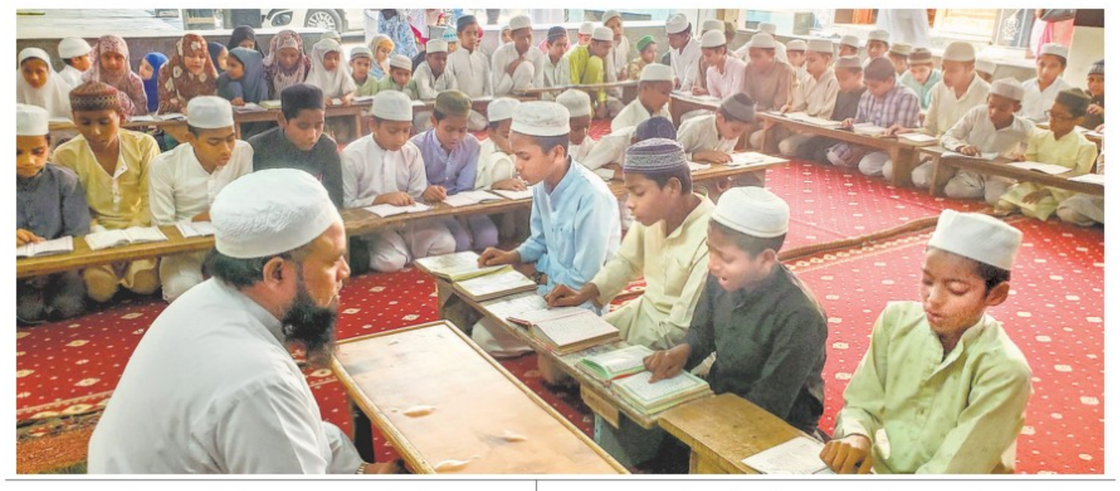


Chart 1: Students enrolled across various schools in 2018-19 and 2023-24

Chart 2: Decline in enrolments across school types in 2023-24 compared with 2018-19

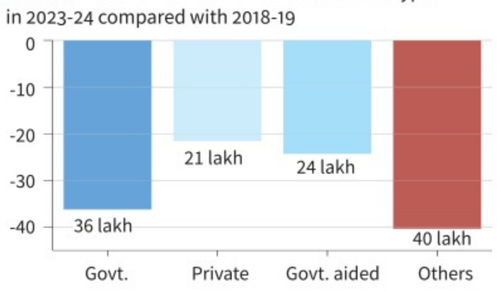


Chart 3: Percentage decline in student enrolments in 2023-24 compared with 2018-19

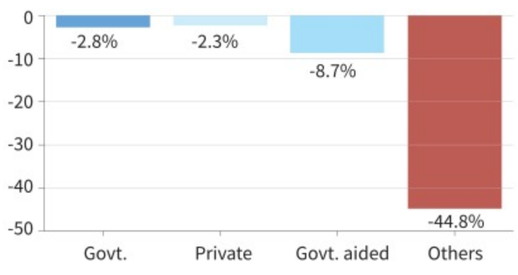


Chart 4: Number of students enrolled across other schools in 2023-24 compared with 2018-19

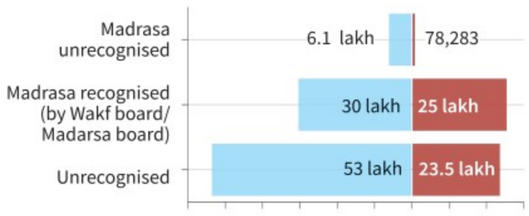


Chart 5: The chart shows the number of other schools in 2023-24 compared with 2018-19

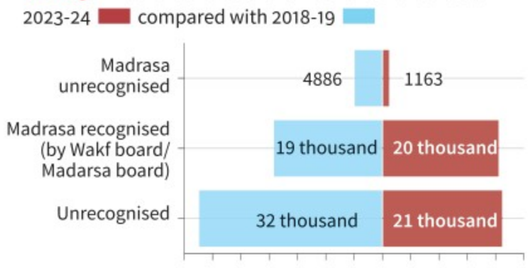
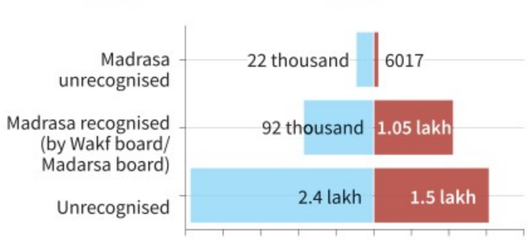


Chart 6: Number of teachers working in other schools in 2023-24 compared with 2018-19



FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 6, 1975

A new health problem for Bombay?

New Delhi, Jan. 5: Urbanisation in Bombay has exposed the metropolis to the risk of plague, according to the World Health Organisation's Export Committee on Plague.

Dr. P.J. Deoras told the Indian Science Congress to-day that field rats once confined to the fields had started invading the city because the fields were taken for buildings.

He warned that field rats not only caused more damage but could also spread plague. The house rat was resistant to plague.

Dr. Deoras, who was formerly Assistant Director of Haffkine Institute in Bombay, said that some years ago the field rat formed only one per cent of the total rat population in the heart of Bombay. "As the city has been urbanised, the population of field rats has increased by 45 per cent," he said. He worried that the probable change in rat population might give rise to a new health problem.

A member of Maharashtra State's Environment Committee, Dr. Deoras also warned against the export of frog legs. This would lead to import of more insecticides and, therefore, to more pollution, he said.

Frogs ate insects which damaged paddy crop, Dr. Deoras said. A frog weighing one kilogram ate 600 grams, or some 10,000 paddy pests, he added. "We are unfortunately killing the frog for export of legs and trying to control the insects with endrin which further kills frogs, fishes, birds and other animals," he said.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JANUARY 6, 1925

Price of tea

London, Jan. 3: The "Evening Standard" says that with the resumption of sales in tea market this week a big effort will be made to defeat brokers whose operations are alleged to have brought the market to confusion. Mincing Lane is preparing for the biggest battle the tea trade has ever witnessed. The paper adds that the recent enormous speculative purchases of tea for resale by bidders who have been able to outbid competitors has had the effect of steadily raising the market price by at least six pence per pound. In the event of efforts to defeat brokers being successful, there is every prospect of substantial reduction in retail prices. The Royal Commission on food prices has had its attention drawn to the position.

From Page One

Rafale, Scorpene deals reach final leg

On July 13, 2023, as Mr. Modi was enroute to Paris, the Defence Acquisition Council chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh accorded the Acceptance of Necessity for the procurement of 26 Rafale-M fighters and three additional Scorpene-class diesel-electric submarines.

Critical for Naval needs

The Rafale purchase includes 22 single seater Rafale-M jets and four twin-seater Rafale trainers, which are not carrier compatible. The 26 jets are meant to fill a critical gap until the indigenous twin engine deck-based fighter, still under development, is ready to be inducted into service. The Navy currently operates two aircraft carriers: INS Vikramaditya procured from Russia, and the indigenously built INS Vikrant which was commissioned in September 2022.

The additional Scorpenes are a critical requirement for the Navy as it grapples with with an ageing fleet and the huge delay in the procurement of six advanced submarines under Project-75I which is now awaiting a final decision between Germany and Spain. As reported by *The Hindu* earlier, the first of three Scorpene submarines is likely to be delivered in 2031.

$1-mn prize for decoding Indus Valley script

He said the government would institute two awards to honour and encourage numismatists and epigraphists who had been working to highlight the ancientness of Tamil culture.

Pointing out that 60% of the graffiti marks found in Tamil Nadu had their parallels to the scripts found on the Indus seals, the Chief Minister said archaeologists had established that more than 90% of the graffiti marks of South India and those of the Indus Valley Civilisation had parallels.

Mr. Stalin, who laid the foundation stone for the statue of Sir John Marshall, said his discovery was a turning point in history and completely changed the understanding of the past. "Many used to argue that it was a figment of imagination that Aryan and Sanskrit originated in India. John Marshall's discovery completely changed the perception. His argument that Indus Valley Civilisation predated Aryan Civilisation and the language spoken in the Indus Valley could be Dravidian has been strengthened further," he said.

'Quarantine animals with bird flu symptoms'

"Collect and send samples (nasal swabs) from affected tigers/other feline species to ICAR-NIHSAD, Bhopal for confirmation and strain identification of Avian Influenza virus," the Centre said, also asking States to report any unusual deaths in poultry and/or any other species.

Zoo staff protection

The Ministry also asked the States to equip all zoo staff with appropriate personal protective equipment, including gloves, masks, and protective suits. "Conduct health screenings for zoo personnel and monitor for flu-like symptoms. Educate zoo staff about the potential zoonotic risks and proper hygiene practices," the circular said.

It added that the deaths of the tigers and a leopard that have tested positive for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HAI) raise significant concerns about the rapid spread of the virus. "The situation demands urgent attention to mitigate risks to both animal and human health. It is requested that the One-Health approach be implemented. integrating the efforts across various sectors, including human health and wildlife, to address the issue in a comprehensive manner," the circular said.

Govt. promises time for compliance

"In addition, structured interaction for feedback with identified stakeholders, such as civil society, industry and government organisations, would also be organised to gather feedback. All feedback/comments will be taken into consideration while finalising the rules," the official from the Information and Broadcasting Ministry said. The final rules as notified will be placed before Parliament.

Stating that adequate time will be given to all entities to adapt their systems to meet the requirements, the official said processing of digital data on the basis of consent given before the new law came into force was permitted. Such processing could continue while citizens were given notice of it so that they could exercise their rights under the law.

"While clear obligations have been cast on 'data fiduciaries' to protect personal data in accordance with the law, prescriptions have been kept to a minimum and compliance burden has been kept low by enabling compliance through digital means. While the entities will prepare themselves for compliance with the law during the period given for adapting their systems, widespread awareness initiatives will be undertaken to educate the citizens about their rights on their personal data," the official said.

3 personnel killed as Coast Guard chopper crashes in Porbandar

In flames: Rescue work under way after a Coast Guard helicopter crashed at the Porbandar airport on Sunday. PTI

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Two pilots and an aircrew diver were killed when a Dhruv advanced light helicopter of the Indian Coast Guard crashed on the runway at the Porbandar airport in Gujarat on Sunday.

The deceased are Commandant (Junior Grade) Saurabh, Deputy Commandant S.K. Yadav, and Manoj Pradhan Navik.

The ALH MK-III helicopter met with the accident around a quarter past noon, the Coast Guard said in a statement. It was on a routine training sortie.

"Immediately post incident, the crew were recovered and shifted to Government Hospital Porbandar, where they were declared brought dead. The reasons leading to the incident are being investigated by a Board of Inquiry," the Coast Guard said.

The mortal remains of the crew members will be cremated in accordance with service traditions and honour, it added.

The incident comes four months after an ALH MK-III helicopter of the Coast Guard crashed into the Arabian Sea off Porbandar on September 2 last year, killing three crew members. The indigenously designed and developed ALH is a twin-engine, multi-role, multi-mission new generation helicopter.

(With PTI inputs)

Farmers' outfits call on PM to hold discussions

Samyukt Kisan Morcha asks Modi to respect democracy and hold talks with all farmers' organisations and save the life of Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who has been on a fast since Nov. 26

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

After separate Kisan Mahapanchayats in Punjab and Haryana, both the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) and the Samyukt Kisan Morcha-Non-Political (SKM-NP) have decided to strengthen protests against the Centre's policies.

The outfits have also been trying to gather public support for the hunger strike being held by SKM-NP leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal.

Mr. Dallewal, who has been on a fast unto death since November 26, had urged farmers from other States too to join the protest. Thousands of farmers had assembled at the Khanauri protest site on the Punjab-Haryana boundary on Saturday in support of Mr. Dallewal.

The SKM held a Kisan Mahapanchayat at Tohana in Haryana on Saturday. The SKM asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to respect democracy and hold discussions with all farmers' organisations and save the life of Mr. Dallewal. The Mahapanchayat also called for greater unity of farmers and extended solidarity with the farmers' struggle at Khanauri and Shambu.

Massive support: Farmers listen to Jagjit Singh Dallewal's speech during the Kisan Mahapanchayat in Patiala on Saturday. ANI

"The farmers warned the Prime Minister against the authoritarian attitude and demanded him to respect democratic principles of governance. Nobody is above the rule of law in a democracy. The NDA-III government must hold discussions with all farmer organisations and save the life of farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal at once," the SKM said in a statement.

Repeal NPFAM

The SKM's Mahapanchayat also asked the farmers of Haryana to write a letter to Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, urging him to repeal the National Policy Framework on Agricultural Marketing (NPFAM).

Senior farmer leader Joginder Singh Ugrahan said the draft NPFAM would lead to the grain trade falling into the hands of corporates. "A sharp and large fight against the World Trade Organisation and the International Monetary Fund will be required," he said.

Bharatiya Kisan Union leader Rakesh Tikait said the Haryana government was misleading the public about the Minimum Support Price for 24 crops.

He added that a committee of senior leaders of the SKM was working towards unity among farmers' groups.

In Dallewal's case, SC balances his right to expression and the state's duty to save his life

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court, in the case of farmers' leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who is fasting unto death, treads a fine line between protecting his freedom of expression and ensuring the state's duty to preserve his life.

The court has clarified that its directions to the Punjab government to hospitalise Mr. Dallewal did not mean the farmers' leader ought to break his fast. However, the very act of hospitalisation may interrupt Mr. Dallewal's fast and its *raison d'etre*, that is, to stake his own life for a cause he obviously believes in and leads. The use of the strong arm of law by the State may also prove counterproductive.

Judgments from the Supreme Court in the *suo motu Ram Lila Maidan Incident* case, and the High Courts, especially the Madras High Court, recognise hunger strike as "a form of protest which has been accepted, both historically and legally in our constitutional jurisprudence".

Determined leader: Jagjit Singh Dallewal speaks to farmers at Khanauri on Saturday. ANI

Reasonable restrictions

The Madras High Court had reasoned that the police's power in the face of a protest by hunger strike was confined to imposing "reasonable restrictions to ensure the safety and convenience of the people at large" without confronting a peaceful protest.

The Supreme Court has recognised hunger strike as a form of expressing dissent which draws its source from the Satyagraha of Mahatma Gandhi and has underscored that it cannot be perceived as a threat to public order.

"Hunger strike, in our country, is a well-known form of peaceful protest, and it is difficult to connect this with public disorder," the apex court observed in its judgment *Mohd. Yousuf Rather vs. State of J&K*, reported in 1979. The court has made it clear that a threat to go on hunger strike or the action itself "cannot be termed as unconstitutional or barred under any law".

Navigate with care

The Punjab government, in Mr. Dallewal's case, has to navigate with care, as, in the words of the Madras High Court in a August 2023 judgment in *P. Thangam vs The Superintendent of Police*, "protesting democratically by way of hunger strike without causing any inconvenience to anybody is the right guaranteed by the Constitution of India".

The Madras High Court noted in 2013 in *K. Thiagarajan @ Thozhar Thaigu vs the Commissioner of Police* that even Chief Ministers had gone on hunger strike. Here, the petitioner had threatened to go on a fast at the Marina beach to highlight the cause of the Tamil language, tradition, and culture. The Chennai Police Commissioner had termed it a punishable act. The High Court had differed, saying the police's job was to put sufficient safeguards in place. The police could even obtain an undertaking from the protesters to maintain peace and orderliness, but could not interfere or impose themselves on basic rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

"Preventive steps should be founded on an actual and prominent threat endangering public order and tranquility," the Supreme Court observed in the *Ram Lila Maidan* case judgment. It cautioned the state to exercise power with great caution and without arbitrariness.

Acquittal of Nanded blast accused 'tight slap' to Cong., says VHP

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) on Sunday termed the acquittal of the 2006 Nanded blast accused a "tight slap" on the Congress's face and asked the party's top leadership to apologise to the Hindu society.

The reaction came after a sessions court in Maharashtra's Nanded acquitted on Saturday all nine surviving accused in the 2006 blast case.

"The Congress's dream of proving Hindus to be terrorists in the 2006 Nanded blast case stands exposed, with the court acquitting all the persons made accused in the case during the Congress rule," VHP national spokesperson Vinod Bansal said.

He claimed that the Congress and the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) had already been "exposed" in the Malegaon blast case. "After 19 years, the Nanded court acquitted all the accused and slapped the Congress hard on its face for its anti-Hindu misdeeds," Mr. Bansal said.

"At least now, the top leadership of the Congress should apologise to Hindu society," he added. The case pertains to an explosion at the home of Laxman Rajkondwar – allegedly a Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) worker in Nanded city – on the intervening night of April 4 and 5, 2006.

"His son Naresh Rajkondwar and VHP activist Himanshu Panse were killed in the blast, allegedly while assembling an explosive device," the investigators had claimed. The case was initially investigated by the Maharashtra ATS before being transferred to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

According to defence lawyer Nitin Runwal, 49 prosecution witnesses were examined during the trial.

NIA arrests accused in Phulwari Sharif PFI case

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested an alleged Popular Front of India (PFI) operative in the Phulwari Sharif case of Patna, Bihar, from the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi, on his arrival from the UAE.

"An NIA team arrested accused Mohammad Sajjad Alam of East Champaran, Bihar as soon as he landed at the airport on Saturday," the agency said, adding that the accused was involved in channelling illegal funds from Dubai to PFI members in Bihar through a syndicate having links in the UAE. The NIA had earlier arrested and chargesheeted 17 accused in the same case.

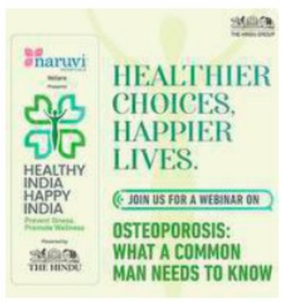
'Calcium intake, exercise crucial for young adults to prevent osteoporosis'

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Adequate calcium intake, regular physical activity, and avoiding smoking and excessive alcohol consumption are essential for preventing bone loss in young adults, experts said at a recent webinar on osteoporosis organised by Naruvi Hospitals, Vellore, in collaboration with *The Hindu*.

The session was part of the "Healthy India, Happy India" initiative aimed at promoting health and wellness nationwide.

The webinar, titled "Osteoporosis: what a common man needs to know", featured M.S. Seshadri, consultant and head of endocrinology at Naruvi Hospitals; Sai Krishna Chaitanya, consultant endocrinologist at Naruvi Hospitals; and Shriram Mahadevan, head of endocrinology at Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research, Chennai.



Dr. Chaitanya kicked off the session by explaining that osteoporosis is a condition where weakened bones significantly increase the risk of fractures.

"Osteoporosis occurs when the balance between bone resorption and bone remodelling is disrupted, leading to decreased bone mass," he explained. He noted that bone mass peaks during the third decade of life, after which bone resorption exceeds bone formation, accelerating bone loss.

Dr. Chaitanya also outlined the key risk factors for osteoporosis, including age, gender, low body weight, smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, and a family history of the disease. He added that individuals with low physical activity or a history of fractures after the age of 40 are also at higher risk.

Dr. Seshadri stressed that adequate calcium intake, especially from dairy products, and regular outdoor activity are crucial for building strong bones during the growth years. "Unfortunately, modern lifestyles, with academic pressures and increased screen time, often limit calcium intake and physical activity, making supplements necessary in some cases," he said.

Dr. Mahadevan discussed treatment options for osteoporosis, explaining that medication choices depend on efficacy, scientific evidence, and the type of fracture being targeted. Bisphosphonates are usually the first line of treatment, while bone-forming agents are preferred for severe osteoporosis or recurrent fractures, especially when bone mineral density is low.

He cautioned that these treatments are typically applicable for 18 to 24 months, and stopping them abruptly could be harmful.

The webinar is available at *https://bit.ly/3PpOWOc*

Made a mistake twice going with RJD, will not repeat it: Nitish

The Hindu Bureau
PATNA

Nitish Kumar

Days after Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) chief Lalu Prasad said the INDIA bloc is ready to welcome him back into its fold, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Sunday said he had made a mistake twice going with the RJD and will not repeat it.

The Janata Dal (United) chief was interacting with presspersons during his ongoing Pragati Yatra in Muzaffarpur.

"I went here and there by mistake. Now I will not go anywhere. I have returned to my old partner," Mr. Kumar said after meeting a self-help group member in the State.

He attacked the RJD saying the party did not do any work but kept getting coverage in newspapers. Taking credit for doing work for women's empowerment, he said that women would never venture outside after sunset during the RJD regime.

"I worked for every section, be it women, men, all castes, Hindus, Muslims, backward classes, extremely backward classes, Dalits and Mahadalits," Mr. Kumar said.

He was accompanied by senior Cabinet colleague Vijay Kumar Chaudhary and Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Kumar Sinha of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

On January 1, in an interview to a local news channel, Mr. Prasad had said: "If he [Nitish Kumar] joins us, we will definitely welcome him. We will also forgive his past mistakes and keep him with us."

'Not in his senses'

Meanwhile, Leader of the Opposition in the Bihar Legislative Assembly Tejashwi Yadav said the Chief Minister was not in his senses and was unable to take his own decisions.

"Nitish *ji* has been hijacked by his close associates. He is not in his senses and is unable to take his own decisions. There is no question of taking him back. It is you people (media) who keep asking if he will come or not. Let him get steady; why do you want to make him unstable? Nobody has given him any offer. You people know Lalu *ji*, he has his own way of speaking," the former Deputy Chief Minister said.

AAP wasted 10 years of Delhi's citizens, says PM

At a rally, Narendra Modi says that what the people of Delhi have seen in the past 10 years is nothing short of a disaster; Retorting, AAP chief says the Centre failed to fulfil multiple promises

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Promise of change: PM Narendra Modi waves to the gathering at Japanese Park, on Sunday. Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar and Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva are also seen. ANI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday again called the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) rule in Delhi a disaster as he addressed a gathering here ahead of the Assembly election.

Multiple leaders and MPs shared the grand stage with Mr. Modi at the BJP's Parivartan rally at Japanese Park in Sector 10, Rohini.

"For the elections, the Delhi BJP has brought forward promising faces. Now, the dreams of the poor and the middle class will be fulfilled in Delhi. For youth, there will be a promising future with opportunities, and I am confident that lotus (the party symbol) is going to bloom in Delhi Assembly elections," Mr. Modi said.

In his appeal to the voters, he said, "I am here, to appeal to the people of Delhi to give an opportunity to the BJP for Delhi's bright future as it is the BJP that can develop Delhi. In the past 10 years, the government that Delhi has seen is no less than *AAP-DA* [disaster], and now we can only hear *AAP-DA nahi sahenge, badal ke rahenge* (We will not tolerate disaster, will bring change) in Delhi..."

Important years

Mr. Modi further said, "The upcoming 25 years are important for India's future, and Delhi's future. In these 25 years, India will become a developed nation, and we will be able to see this journey of developed India before our eyes. We will see India passing through a new phase of modernity. We must develop Delhi as the capital of a developed India..."

Mr. Modi targeted Arvind Kejriwal for building a '*sheesh mahal*' (glass palace) for himself, referring to the controversy surrounding alleged irregularities in the renovation of the Chief Minister's official residence. "Today, entire Delhi is proud of Bharat Mandapam, Yasho Bhoomi, Kartavya Path. However, I feel sad that the *AAP-DA* government wasted 10 years of the people of Delhi. When the people of Delhi were fighting COVID, these people were focused on building a '*sheesh mahal*'," he said.

He said the AAP government had left no stone unturned in destroying Delhi's transport system. "Look at the condition they have created. When it's summer, the Delhi people fight over drinking water; when it rains, streets are waterlogged; and in winter, it gets difficult to breathe in polluted air," he said.

"The energy of the people of Delhi is being spent on dealing with the *AAP-DA* government 365 days a year. Hence, only when the *AAP-DA* is removed from Delhi the double engine of development and good governance will follow. The *AAP-DA* government did not even implement the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana properly here; it created hurdles in building permanent houses for the poor. Around 30,000 houses built under old schemes are lying vacant...," he said.

Kejriwal hits back

Later in the day, AAP national convener Mr. Kejriwal retorted by raising multiple promises that, he said, the Central government has not fulfilled, and because of which Delhi's development has stopped.

He said that the Prime Minister was interested only in abusing him and the AA was still working with the Centre on different development projects, as the Centre governed half of Delhi since it was not a full State, for the benefit of the people of Delhi.

Cong. atoning for Mamata's expulsion, says party leader

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Mamata Banerjee was expelled from the Congress in 1997, and on January 1, 1998, she started the Trinamool Congress. FILE PHOTO

Senior West Bengal Congress leader Pradip Bhattacharya has stirred up a hornets' nest by saying the party is still atoning for the expulsion of Trinamool Congress chairperson and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

"The Congress is still atoning for expelling Mamata Banerjee. I had warned against her expulsion. But Somendranath Mitra [then State Congress president] was forced to take the decision under pressure from the central leadership," the veteran Congress leader said here on Saturday.

Mr. Bhattacharya made the remarks while unveiling the statue of Mitra, who passed away in 2020. Congress State president Subhankar Sarkar was present.

Ms. Banerjee was expelled from the Congress on December 21, 1997, and on January 1, 1998, she started the Trinamool Congress. The Trinamool joined hands with the Congress to defeat the 34-year-old Left front government in 2011.

Since then, the Trinamool has been in power in the State and maintained its political dominance while the vote share of the Congress has plummeted. The grand old party currently has no representation in the Assembly.

On Sunday, reflecting on his remarks, the 79-year-old Congress leader said he was referring to a situation that existed about 28 years ago when the Congress central leadership pressured the party State unit to expel Ms. Banerjee. He said former Congress president Sitaram Kesri insisted on her expulsion in 1997.

Mr. Bhattacharya is among the senior-most Congress leaders from West Bengal. He had held the post of State Congress president and represented the party in the Rajya Sabha. In 2024, he contested the Lok Sabha election from Kolkata North. Of late, the State Congress leadership has been warming to the Trinamool, after Mr. Sarkar took over the reins of the State unit from Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury.

The remarks by the leader were welcomed by the Trinamool leadership. Trinamool Congress leader Kunal Ghosh said that Mr. Bhattacharya was right as Ms. Banerjee was committed to fighting the Communist Party of India (Marxist) whereas the rest of the Congress leaders were not.

Mr. Chowdhury said while the expulsion of Ms. Banerjee was a thing of the past, she had left no stone unturned to "destroy the Congress party in West Bengal" after coming to power.

INBRIEF

Chinese annexation occurred during Nehru's term, says BJP

The BJP on Sunday flayed the Congress for alleging Chinese occupation of the Indian territory during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's term, saying the party could not get away with "such lies" as it occurred during Nehru's tenure. The reaction came a day after the Congress alleged, "China kept occupying India's land. Narendra Modi kept giving clean chit." "Imagine blaming PM Modi for Nehru's betrayal," BJP IT department head Amit Malviya said on X. PTI

Bidhuri expresses regret for comment on Priyanka Gandhi

Former MP and BJP candidate from Kalkaji Ramesh Bidhuri on Sunday expressed regret after he received flak from the Opposition for a statement he made about Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi. The Congress had demanded an apology from the BJP for the statement. "Some people are making statements on social media for political gain based on a statement given by me in some context. My intention was not to insult anyone. But still if anyone has been hurt then I express my regret," he posted on X.

Meghalaya is not a Christian State: NGO slams Minister

A Meghalaya-based NGO, Thma U Rangli-Juki (TUR), has criticised the State's Education Minister, Rakkam A. Sangma, for planning to consecrate Captain Williamson Sangma University with a Christian prayer service. The TUR also slammed the Minister for claiming Meghalaya was a Christian State. "First, while Meghalaya may have a majority Christian population, this does not make it a Christian State. Second, according to the Constitution, the State and its institutions are secular and must be equidistant from all religious groups," it said.

Centre undermining rights of hill tribes, says Zodintluanga

A former Congress Minister and Mizoram-based leader of the All India Adivasi Congress Committee, Zodintluanga, has accused the Narendra Modi government of undermining the rights of the Adivasis and hill tribes, particularly in the country's northeastern region. He criticised the policies of the BJP-led government at the Centre and said it failed to uphold the rights of the tribal communities and marginalised groups across India. "His [Modi's] authoritarian rule must end if we are to safeguard the values that our country was built upon," he added.

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NIT No.: CE(P)/WBSETCL/IT/CorpLAN/24-25/14 Date: 06.01.2025	Upgradation of existing Corporate LAN (SITTO) at WBSETCL Head Quarter (Vidyut Bhavan, Kolkata) with comprehensive maintenance for 05 years and other associated work as defined in the bid document. Bid documents can be downloaded from **06.01.2025** and bids shall be submitted up to **04:00 P.M., 05.02.2025.**
NIT No.: CE(Procurement)/WBSETCL/IT/2024-25/15 Date: 06.01.2025	Supply, delivery, installation & maintenance of IT Articles for different Departments of WBSETCL (Vidyut Bhavan, Kolkata). Bid documents can be downloaded from **06.01.2025, 11:00 A.M.** and bids shall be submitted up to **04:00 P.M., 04.02.2025.**
NIT No.: CE(Procurement)/WBSETCL/CompositePkg C8/2024-25/16 Date: 06.01.2025	Designing, engineering, civil construction, supply, delivery, erection, testing, commissioning (on turn key basis) including transportation, insurance and storage i.r.o. the following- (i) 220/132/33 kV GI sub-station at Nandanpur (District – Bankura) and its associated Transmission Line from BAPL sub-station. (ii) Upgradation of existing Barjora 132 kV sub-station to 220 kV GI sub-station (District – Bankura) and its associated Transmission Line from DPL Unit 8. (iii) Construction of 132/33 kV GI sub-station at Bagjola (District – North 24 Parganas) along with GIS bay at New Town IIC sub-station. (iv) Construction of various bay extension and transformer augmentation at New Chanditala sub-station along with Mongalpur 220 kV GI sub-station of WBSETCL. Bid documents can be downloaded from **06.01.2025, 11:00 A.M.** and bids shall be submitted up to **04:00 P.M., 10.02.2025.**

Visit the following websites:- www.wbtenders.gov.in, www.wbsetcl.in for details.
ICA- T232(3)/2025

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Date for Sale and Submission of the e-Tender Documents: From 06.01.2025 @ 15.00 Hrs to 27.01.2025 @ 15.30 Hrs. For detailed information visit our website: https://srmetender.mahatransco.in
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Bid Identification No.Civil/EST-13/2024-25
NOTICE INVITING TENDER UNDER NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement

1.	Name of the Work	: Construction of SFRC Pre-Tensioned and Pre-Cast Compound wall around Ac.95.47 dec. at Basantpur in Sambalpur District for the work, 'Construction of Integrated Aqua Park, Chiplima, Sambalpur'
2.	Value of the Work	: Rs.352.65 Lakhs (Approx.)
3.	Period of Completion	: 3 (Three) Calendar Months
4.	Availability of tender online for Bidding	
I.	Start Date	: 18:00 Hours of dt. 10.01.2025
II.	End Date	: 17:00 Hours of dt. 27.01.2025
III.	Opening date	: 17:30 Hours of dt. 27.01.2025

Tender details can be seen from the e-procurement portal: **www.tendersorissa.gov.in.** Corrigendum or Addendum if any will not be published in newspapers and can be seen **in e-procurement portal** as well as in **IDCO website**.
Sd/- Chief General Manager (Civil), IDCO, Bhubaneswar
CAD-2026: OIPR-14003/11/0091/2425

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD
Office of the Chief Engineer (South)
7th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K. G. Road, Bengaluru-560 009.
IFT No.:BWSSB/EIC/CE(S)/ACE(S)-II/DCE(M)-I/TA(S)/10188/2024-25 Dt: 04.01.2025

INVITATION FOR TENDER - CALL-5
(Through KPP portal only)

BWSSB, invites tenders in two cover tender system from eligible contractors for the work of Providing, laying 100/150 mm dia DI pipeline to replace 75/100mm dia corroded CI water pipeline at Cheluvadipalya DMA and surrounding area Coming under JJR S/s of AEE SW2 Sub-Division.

Amount put to tender: **Rs.289.42 Lakhs.** EMD: **Rs.4.34 Lakhs.**

Last date and time for submission of tender document is: **15-01-2025 upto 17:00 hours.** Tender will be opened on **17-01-2025 after 11:00 hours.** The details regarding the tender and participation in the kpp portal process can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** For further details contact the signed office during working hours.

Sd/-
Chief Engineer (South)
DIPR/CP/AAPL/RO4153/24-25

DIRECTORATE OF TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING
Press Advertisement No: File No.14783/2024/TCP-5 Date : 06.01.2025
NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Name of Work	Consultancy services for Development of Land Use Information System (LUIS) - Geo-referencing, Digitization and Standardization of Geo – database on GIS Platform for the Approved Master Plans.
EMD	Rs.1,00,000/-
Availability of Tender Documents	**www.tntenders.gov.in** @ 10:00 hrs (IST) on 08.01.2025
Start Date and Time of Submission of Tender	29.01.2025 @ 10:00 hrs (IST)
Last date and time for receipt of online bids	14.02.2025 @ 18:00 hrs (IST)
Bid Opening Date	17.02.2025 @ 15:00 hrs (IST)
Name and Address of the office inviting Tender	The Director, Directorate of Town and Country Planning, 3rd Floor, CMDA Complex, E & C Market Road, Koyambedu, Chennai – 600 107

Further details can be seen on the website **www.tntenders.gov.in**
DIPR/ 12 /Tender/2025 Director of Town and Country Planning

भारत सरकार - अंतरिक्ष विभाग / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA - DEPARTMENT OF SPACE
इसरो ISRO निर्माण एवं अनुरक्षण समूह, एसडीएससी-शार / CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE GROUP, SDSC-SHAR
श्रीहरिकोटा / नेल्लूर (जिला), आं.प्र. / SRIHARIKOTA - 524124

संक्षिप्त ई–निविदा सूचना / Brief E-TENDER NOTICE

सं.शार:सीएमजी सिविल: अनुरक्षण: ई–जन निविदा / No:SHAR:CMGCIVIL:MAINT:E-PT-16/24-25 तिथि/ Date. 02.01.2025

भारत के राष्ट्रपति की ओर से **"एसडीएससी शार के एसएमपी व ईटीएफ के बड़े भंडारण भवन सुविधा में आरसीसी रैंप का निर्माण तथा 6बी भवन में बाड़े एवं चौकी का प्रतिस्थापन"** (टी/सी-24-057, अनुमानित लागत ₹17.88 लाख), **"एसडीएससी शार आरसीसी ओएचटी की मरम्मत तथा क्यूसीएच में डब्ल्यूटीपी की रंगाई–पुताई एवं पुस्तकालय परिसर कीपाकम की रंगाई–पुताई"** (टी/सी-24-058, अनुमानित लागत ₹18.50 लाख), **"एसडीएससी के एसएमपीसी में संचकन सुविधा भवन सं. 116 में संरचनात्मक मरम्मत एवं निपटान मंच–III तथा यूनिट में टीडीआई ड्रम भंडारण, सफाई एवं निपटान के लिए प्रस्तावित यार्ड का सुदृढीकरण,"** (टी/सी-24-059, अनुमानित लागत ₹ 40.62 लाख), **"एसडीएससी शार के एसएलपी क्षेत्र में विविध सिविल कार्य"** (टी/सी-24-060, अनुमानित लागत ₹ 26.05 लाख), **"एसडीएससी शार के जीरो पॉइंट तथा एफएलपी क्षेत्रों में विविध सिविल कार्य"** (टी/सी-24-061, अनुमानित लागत ₹18.65 लाख) हेतु मद दर ई–निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। निविदा दस्तावेजों को **22.01.2025** को **14:30** बजे तक डाउनलोड किया जा सकता है। इच्छुक निविदाकार विस्तृत सूचना के लिए हमारी वेबसाइट **www.isro.gov.in** या **www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO** देखें।

On behalf of President of India, Item Rate tenders are invited through e-tendering; **"Extension of RCC ramps at Bulk Storage Facility & Replacement of fencing and posts at 6B building, SMP & ETF, SDSC SHAR"** (T/C-24-057, Est .cost ₹17.88 Lakhs); **"Repairs to RCC OHT & Painting work to WTP at QCH & Painting work to Library complex, Keepakam, SDSC SHAR."** (T/C-24-058, Est cost ₹18.50 Lakhs); **"Structural repairs in Casting Facility Bldg no. 116 & Refurbishment of Disposal Bed-III & Proposed yard for TDI drum storage, Cleaning & disposal at Unit-01, SMPC, SDSC SHAR."** (T/C-24-059, Est cost ₹ 40.62 Lakhs); **"Misc civil works at SLP areas, SDSC SHAR."** (T/C-24-060, Est cost ₹ 26.05 Lakhs): **"Misc civil works in "O" Point & FLP areas, SDSC SHAR."** (T/C-24-061, Est cost ₹18.65 Lakhs). Tender documents can be downloaded up to **22.01.2025**, **14:30** hrs. Interested tenderers may visit **www.isro.gov.in** or **www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO** for details.

हस्ताक्षरित- समूह प्रधान, सीएमजी / एसडीएससी शार / Sd/- GROUP HEAD, CMG / SDSC SHAR

ODISHA HYDRO POWER CORPORATION LTD.
OHPC
(*A Gold Rated State PSU*)
O/O Sr. GENERAL MANAGER, Rengali Hydro Electric Project, Rengali
P.O: RENGALI DAM SITE, DIST: ANGUL (ODISHA) INDIA, PIN: 759105
TEL: 06760-266031, Email: sgmel500@gmail.com

No. OHPC: RHEP/TW/PUR-III-146/ 8950 /Date: 27.12.2024

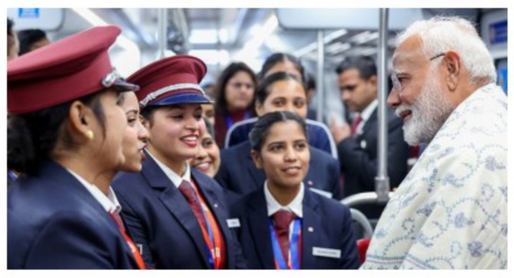
TENDER CALL NOTICE No.39/2024-25

Sealed Tenders are invited in two part i.e. (i) Techno Commercial bid & (ii) Price bid in separate sealed envelopes from the reputed manufacturers of Power Transformer for the work as mentioned below.

Description of Materials / Services	Cost of tender paper (Non-refundable) in Rs.	EMD (Refundable)	Period of availability of tender at OHPC website (Sale)	Last date & Time of receipt of Tender	Date & Time of opening of Techno Commercial bid
Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of one no. 20 MVA, 220/33 KV Station Service Transformer for RHEP, Rengali	Rs.11,800/- (Rs.10,000/- + GST @18%)	Rs.4,99,270.00	From Dt.08.01.2025 To Dt.06.02.2025 (Up to 04.00 PM)	Up to 04:30 PM Dt.06.02.2025	At 05:00 PM Dt.06.02.2025

For details of the tender documents, terms and conditions please visit our website : www.ohpcltd.com
Unit Head
RHEP, Rengali
CAD-2027: OIPR-04022/11/0039/2425

INBRIEF



Delhi to Meerut to take under 40 minutes on the new RRTS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday inaugurated a 13-km section of the Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) between New Ashok Nagar in Delhi and Sahibabad in Uttar Pradesh, costing ₹4,600 crore. This project allows people to travel from New Ashok Nagar to Meerut South in under 40 minutes. The Namo Bharat train service will operate every 15 minutes, with fares starting at ₹150. Two RRTS stations in Delhi are now operational, with more expected by rmid-2025. Mr. Modi also launched development projects worth over ₹12,200 crore, including a 2.8-km stretch of the Delhi Metro Phase IV.

Centre to launch new round of PLI scheme for steel sector

The Union government is set to launch another round of production-linked incentive scheme for the steel sector, the Union Ministry of Steel said in a statement on Sunday. "Union Minister of Steel and Heavy Industries...will launch 'PLI scheme 1.1' for the steel industry and call for applications...on January 6," the statement said. The Centre had earlier introduced the PLI scheme to encourage domestic production of specialty steel and lower imports by drawing in capital investments. Initially launched for three sectors to address the need to boost domestic manufacturing, the PLI scheme was later extended to include steel in November 2020. PTI

Govt. launches 'Panchayat Se Parliament 2.0' for women

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will on Monday inaugurate "Panchayat Se Parliament 2.0" which seeks to give insight into the Constitution and parliamentary procedures to over 500 women representatives from Panchayati Raj institutions from across the country. Organised to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of tribal icon Birsa Munda, the programme will have workshops and sessions, a guided tour of the new Parliament House, Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya, and Rashtrapati Bhavan for the participants, offering them a deeper understanding of India's legislative process and the functioning of democratic institutions. PTI

Soren seeks suggestions from public for Budget preparation

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren on Sunday launched the Abua Budget Portal and mobile app to seek suggestions, opinions, and ideas of the general public regarding the Budget preparation for the financial year 2025-26. Mr. Soren said the government had a special attention on Budget preparation that promoted the interests of the general public along with the sustainable, inclusive and all-round development of the State. The portal invites opinions until January 17, 2025, with three top suggestions to be honoured by the government. Mr. Soren has also instructed officials to prepare an action plan for revenue collection.

Four-lane Banihal bypass opens in J&K's Ramban

The 2.35-km stretch, strategically located on NH-44, will boost 'national security logistics' and tourism, significantly reduce travel time for vehicles headed to Kashmir Valley, says Nitin Gadkari

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

Smooth ride: The newly constructed four-lane 2.35-km bypass to Banihal town in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district on Sunday. ANI

Union Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari on Sunday described the completion of the Banihal bypass in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district as a milestone in strengthening "national security logistics" and enhancing "tourism prospects of the region".

Taking to X, Mr. Gadkari announced the completion of the four-lane 2.35-km stretch to Banihal town, built at a cost of ₹224.44 crore. Strategically located on the Ramban-Banihal section of National Highway 44, it effectively addresses the persistent bottlenecks caused by roadside markets and shops, Mr. Gadkari said.

He said two-lane traffic will be allowed initially and four-lane traffic permitted after "junction development" within 15 days.

The Minister said this critical infrastructure ensured unhindered traffic flow, significantly reducing travel time and congestion for both tourists and defence vehicles, *en route* to the Kashmir Valley. "Beyond improving regional connectivity, the bypass strengthens national security logistics and enhances tourism prospects in the region," he said.

NH-44 is a major highway in India. The longest in the country, it stretches from Srinagar in the north to Kanniyakumari in the south.

The Centre has embarked on a major mission in J&K to ensure that the NH-44 remains an all-weather road connecting the Kashmir Valley with the rest of the country. Travel time on the 290-km-long Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, which is part of NH-44, has reduced from nine hours to around six hours after significant upgrades such as tunnels.

However, the highway passing through the tough mountains of Ramban district posed a major challenge in the face of slopping ridges and congested roads, especially in the Banihal area. Multiple tunnels, including the critical Marog-Digdol and Digdol-Khuni-Nallah, are in the final stages to ensure seamless traffic on the highway. The upgrade of the 32-km stretch between Ramban and Banihal, which is under way, will reduce travel time between Srinagar and Jammu, making the Kashmir Valley very easy to reach. National Conference MLA Banihal Sajjad Shaheen inaugurated the 2.35-km stretch.

Fresh snowfall in Kashmir; four die in accident in Kishtwar

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

Officials say that the northern districts of Kashmir Valley received more snowfall. PTI

Several areas in the Kashmir Valley experienced fresh snowfall on Sunday, which also disrupted air traffic at the Srinagar airport.

Four persons were killed in a road accident in Kishtwar when their vehicle plunged into a gorge, officials said. The victims, all residents of Garh, Paddar, Kishtwar, were driving to Massu village from Paddar in Kishtwar district.

J&K Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah expressed grief.

In the Kashmir Valley, the northern districts received major snowfall compared with south and central Kashmir, an official said. North Kashmir's Kupwara and Baramulla received snowfall for most of the day on Sunday.

A government spokesperson said the Kupwara administration had started clearing major roads in the district "to ensure a seamless flow of essential services".

Meanwhile, snowfall led to the cancellation of most flights at Srinagar airport.

The Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), a Srinagar-based traders' body, expressed deep concern over the massive flight disruptions that have plagued the Srinagar International Airport over the past three days.

"This crisis has been precipitated by the Airports Authority of India's continued failure to install the promised upgraded Instrument Landing System (ILS), which would enable safe flight operations even in low visibility conditions. The widespread cancellations have severely impacted thousands of travellers, including international tourists, Umrah pilgrims, students returning to educational institutions, and patients travelling for medical treatment," Faiz Ahmad Bakshi, secretary general of the KCCI, said.

He said the impact on the business community and the general public was severe.

TRAI to soon bring in tighter regulations to control spam

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India will start this month a pilot to onboard paper-based and past permissions given by customers for receiving commercial communications onto its digital distributed ledger technology (DLT) platform, Chairman Anil Kumar Lahoti said.

This process, in the long run, would include scrubbing and verifying their current validity and offering opt-outs to those keen on it. He added that tighter regulations on curbing spam as well as new consultation examining an authorisation framework for telemarketers can also be expected in the coming weeks.

TRAI has also ruled out any rethink on its latest regulation that mandates service providers to offer separate special tariff vouchers (STV) for voice calls and SMS.

Mr. Lahoti told PTI in an interview that while consumers can be encouraged to use data, they cannot be "compelled" to do so.

"TRAI's focus is to protect not only the interest of the industry, but also the interest of the consumer, who must have the option to pay only for services they need," he said.

The regulator is also all set to initiate a massive rehaul of its IT system, a move, it expects, would lead to rationalisation and reduction in multiple instances of filings by telecom companies and other industry stakeholders. Deloitte, which has been roped in as a consultant, is on the verge of submitting its report on revamp of its IT systems.

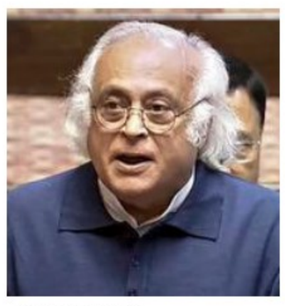
PM must set up independent panel to review the Great Nicobar project: Congress

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday termed the Great Nicobar Island infrastructure project a "recipe for ecological and humanitarian disaster", and said the Prime Minister should immediately order a pause and set up an independent panel to review it.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said the Modi government was pushing ahead with the project despite several objections raised by him in the past.

"The ₹72,000-crore mega infrastructure project in Great Nicobar Island is a recipe for ecological and humanitarian disaster. My exchanges on this unfolding tragedy with the Union Minister of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change are all in the public domain," he said in a post on X.



Jairam Ramesh

The former Union Environment Minister said the project's various components were an international container transshipment port, an airport, a power plant, a massive greenfield township, and tourism facilities.

"The entire project will destroy at least 33,000 acres of pristine tropical forest. Now comes news that the project is proposed to be expanded to establish – a cruise terminal to facilitate a global port-led city, a shipbuilding and ship-repair facility, and an export-import port," Mr. Ramesh said.

He claimed that an additional 100 acres of biodiversity-rich forests would be destroyed on account of these new proposals.

"This is sheer folly multiplying. The blatant hypocrisy of a Prime Minister who boasts to the world of his deep commitment to environmental causes stands thoroughly exposed."

"There is no mystery on who will get these port contracts. If the PM wants to walk his talk, he should immediately order a pause and set up an independent panel to review the project," he said.

Not a single person will be spared, says Fadnavis

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday yet again said that the State government was probing the Beed sarpanch murder case with full determination and not a single person would be spared, no matter who they were or what power or position they held.

Speaking to presspersons in Nagpur, Mr. Fadnavis urged political leaders not to politicise the murder case, and that the government and the Beed police were actively working on the case with full determination.

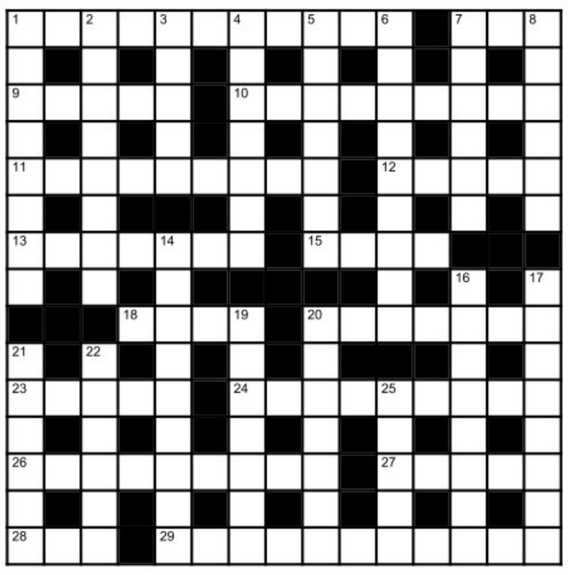
"Everyone is working in full strength to trace the accused who are absconding. No one behind the murder of Santosh Deshmukh will be spared," the Chief Minister said.

TH CROSSWORD + 14375

(set by Arden)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Brain dead means life missing - provided it's a plant (5,6)
7 Initially not awake, peaceful sleep (3)
9 He drove fast into a cassia tree (5)
10 Family involvement in other castes shows poor taste (9)
11 Disgusted with a nude representation that took place (9)
12 Recalled story about Charlie's confidence (5)
13 Copper's presence in public transport is a cause of anxiety (7)
15 Get a refund - reclaim some value (4)
18 Uncle in America gets caught in a Ponzi scheme (4)
20 Quietly start again, I suppose (7)
23 Old money-like following a news (5)
24 Extremely essential to block carbon pollution over a city (9)
26 Auto race in full bloom (9)
27 Leave a European city (5)
28 Shortly, moon can be base (3)
29 Perhaps agree to stay - confirm he is keen (5,6)

Down

1 Missing when one is in it (8)
2 Declare girl's overweight (8)
3 Small story rehashed (5)
4 Lands as one set off on both sides (7)
5 Part of television shows animal eating fish... (7)
6 ...no gloss in teleprocessing - perhaps, that's where the trouble starts (9)
7 It points to lack of leverage on both sides (6)
8 Regular press meets as to get some money (6)
14 Supports fast bowling - that's key (9)
16 A lousy way to get going, at last - victory for one from the Balkans (8)
17 Discourage bottles - able to get a wine bottle (8)
19 Crowding, only bachelors allowed in China (7)
20 Associate to catch up by mid-afternoon (7)
21 Nullify serious illness by changing hands (6)
22 He is appointed warden (6)
25 Follow Harry - seen around university (5)

SUDOKU

7		5	4		2			
8				7			5	
6					3		1	
	3	4	5					
			7	1	6			
					4	9	8	
	7		9					8
	9			8				3
			3		1	4		7

No.SS6392 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

O	A	B				M	R	P	C			
C	A	M	E	O	S		D	E	F	E	R	R	A	L
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D	O	M	I	N	A	N	T		M	E	T	E	O	R
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Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

8	6	3	9	7	4	5	1	2
2	9	5	3	1	8	4	7	6
7	1	4	2	5	6	9	8	3
4	2	1	8	6	5	3	9	7
9	3	7	1	4	2	8	6	5
5	8	6	7	9	3	2	4	1
6	5	2	4	8	1	7	3	9
1	4	9	5	3	7	6	2	8
3	7	8	6	2	9	1	5	4

FAITH

Guru Gobind Singh, an icon

The vision of Guru Gobind Singhji is timeless. His exemplary life is an epitome of courage and resoluteness. It is an inspiration for all in contemporary times. He was an icon transcending time, space, boundaries, narrowness and fragmentation, said Prof. Kumool Abbi.

Guru Gobind Singhji was only nine when his father the ninth Guru Tegh Bahadur was martyred. He exhibited no visible grief and stoically took up the leadership of the Sikhs. Guru Gobind Singh was born in an historical period when north India reeled under the tyrannical and oppressive rule of the Moghuls. In the year 1699 Guru Gobind Singhji formed the institution of the Khalsa. The order of the Khalsa was an egalitarian one. Guru Gobind Singhji's pluralistic philosophy encompassed the acceptance of diverse religious identities advocating religious harmony.

He deeply imbibed the true spirit of the saint soldier: 'If I fall as a martyr while fighting my enemies then I think I shall have realised the truth'. He fought 14 wars against his oppressors and tyrants but with ethical and moral principles, never taking captives or damaging the place of worship, and was never the first to be the aggressor. He believed as stated in Zafarnama: only when all avenues fail, it is then righteous to pick up the sword.

Guru Gobind Singh is credited with finalising the manuscript of *Guru Granth Sahib* and declaring it to be the ultimate Guru for the Sikhs. It is his vision which has given a distinct identity to Sikhs. Guru Gobind Singh's metaphysical sublime and exquisite poetry have been immortalised in his composition *Dasam Granth*, reflected in *Jaap Sahib*, *Chandi Di Vaar*, and *Benti Chaupai* among others.

PRECIOUSMETALS

Gold, silver suffer from November blues

B. Krishna Kumar

Precious metals extended their lacklustre performance in December too. The range-bound price action witnessed in November spilled over to December as well with the price of both gold and silver remaining in a broad range.

The lack of any meaningful triggers played a key role in keeping the precious metals prices under check.

Comex gold closed 1.29% lower in December to settle at $2,639.3 an ounce. Comex silver saw a relatively steeper cut of 5.82% in December to settle at $29.29 an ounce.

Reflecting the lacklustre trend in the global markets, MCX gold closed 0.45% lower to settle at ₹76,777 per 10-gram at the end of December. MCX silver lost 4.3% in last month to close at ₹87,226 per kilogram.

As anticipated last month, Comex gold price remained in a broad range, devoid of any meaningful trend. The recent price action is likely to persist with Comex gold likely to remain in the range of $2,530-2,730.

A breakout from this range would set the tone for the next big move.

Medium-term outlook

As observed in prior updates, the medium-term outlook is positive for Comex gold. The price is likely to resume its uptrend once the ongoing consolidation is over.

The next major target for Comex gold is $2,850-$2,900. The journey towards this target would commence on the completion of the anticipated short-term consolidation.

Weak trend likely

In line with expectations, Comex silver too was stuck in a broad range of $29.75-$31 mentioned last month. Silver price is likely to trade in the range of $29-$31.8 in the short-term. The short-term outlook for silver appears negative and the price could slip to the immediate target of $26.5-$27. The price has to move above $33 to indicate the resumption of long-term uptrend. Until the Comex silver price moves above $33, expect a range bound to weak trend to persist.

In sync with last month's expectations, MCX gold price was confined to a range, devoid of any meaningful price movement on either direction. The gold price is likely to meander in the ₹73,500-₹79,200 range in the near term. A breakout from this range would influence the next directional move in MCX gold.

MCX silver price has been in a downtrend since December 11, 2024. The recent downward move is likely to sustain in the near future and a fall to the next support zone at ₹83,500-₹84,500 appears likely. This view would be invalidated if the silver price moves above ₹96,000-level.

To summarise, gold is likely to be confined in a range in the next few weeks. A move out of this range would set the tone for the next directional move.

Silver prices on the other hand looks relatively weak and could seek lower levels.

(The author is a Chennai-based analyst and trader. The views and opinion featured in this column are based on the analysis of short-term price movement in gold and silver futures at COMEX & Multi Commodity Exchange of India. This is not meant to be a trading or investment advice.)

Send queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in ID. Our experts in personal finance will respond to select queries, but will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund, share or fixed deposit.

For a rainy day: Comprehensive bike insurance offers peace of mind by ensuring financial security in the event of an accident. THE HINDU

Uninsured two-wheelers are a major safety concern

Two-wheeler fatalities rose by 8% in 2022, claiming almost 75,000 lives or 44% of the over 1.68 lakh accident deaths that year; India logs highest number of road accidents globally

'ZERO' COVER

Manas Kapoor

> Driving sans insurance has legal consequences; first-time violators face a fine of ₹2,000 and/or up to three months in jail; repeat offences involve a fine of ₹4,000

> As per a General Insurance Council report, over 60% of vehicles in India are uninsured with two-wheelers leading the category

Each year, countless lives are lost on Indian roads due to accidents. India has the highest number of road accidents globally, driven by reckless driver behaviour, non-compliance with traffic rules and human errors. Alarmingly, two-wheeler fatalities rose by 8% in 2022, claiming nearly 75,000 lives – accounting for 44% of the 1,68,491 road accident deaths that year.

India's roads have become busier over the years as average per capita income rises, leading to more people purchasing two-wheelers. With the world's third-largest road network, the country had 354 million vehicles as of FY22, as per Statista. Yet, a significant concern stays– lack of insurance among vehicle owners.

As per a General Insurance Council report, over 60% of vehicles in India are uninsured, with two-wheelers leading the category. In 2015-2016, Only 8.26 crore of the about 19 crore registered vehicles were insured.

Reasons for hesitation

Although, third-party motor insurance is mandatory, many vehicle owners remain uninsured. This issue stems from three key factors: many bike owners avoid insurance to save money, and those who buy, often fail to renew policies and lack awareness about insurance products.

But being uninsured can severely jeopardise your financial security. In the event of a road accident causing property damage or injury, you have to bear all costs out of pocket.

Taking precautions by insuring your vehicle is far better than regretting it later. Driving without insurance also carries legal consequences. First-time violators face a fine of ₹2,000 and/or up to three months in jail. Repeat offences incur a ₹4,000 fine. Here are your options for insuring two-wheelers viz.

Two types of bike insurance are available: third-party insurance and own-damage (OD) insurance.

Third-party insurance:

This mandatory coverage protects against liabilities arising from damage to someone else's property or injury in an accident. Compensation depends on factors like severity of injuries, third party's age, and their profession or income.

The maximum compensation is ₹7.5 lakh for third-party death or property damage. However, this policy does not cover: damage to your own bike, belongings inside your bike during an accident and theft or total destruction of bike.

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) determines the premium for third-party insurance based on engine capacity. For example, the premium for bikes with engines between 75 CC and 150 CC is ₹3,851 for a five-year policy. The IRDAI has mandated five-year long-term third-party bike insurance to cut renewal hassles.

OD insurance

This policy covers damages to your bike caused by fire, theft, natural disasters or man-made incidents. Often bundled with third-party insurance, it offers enhanced protection. Add-ons like zero depreciation cover, roadside assistance, key and lock replacement, tyre protector, and invoice price can help you boost coverage.

Own damage insurance policies are valid for one year and must be renewed annually. However, many insurance companies have also started offering long-term plans like 3+3 years, which are highly affordable. The premium depends on factors like the vehicle's age, registration location, make and model, and voluntary deductibles.

For all-around protection, a comprehensive policy combining third-party and OD insurance is recommended.

Comprehensive bike insurance offers peace of mind by ensuring financial security in the event of an accident. It safeguards not just your finances but also provides coverage for unforeseen situations like theft, natural calamities, and third-party liabilities.

As the number of vehicles on India's roads continues to rise and the risk of accidents grows, having adequate insurance is not just a legal need but a very important step in protecting yourself and others.

Comprehensive bike insurance offers peace of mind by ensuring financial security in the event of an accident. Think about it– you've invested so much in your motorcycle, a companion for your daily rides and cherished journeys.

With today's technology, buying or renewing bike insurance is incredibly simple and can be done in under a minute. This small step ensures your safety, safeguards your bike, and keeps you prepared for any unexpected situation on the road.

(The writer is head, two-wheeler insurance, Policybazaar.com)

When style matters

THINKINVESTOR

One mutual fund need not have a significantly different portfolio compared with an another mutual fund with the same benchmark but with a different investment strategy

Venkatesh Bangaruswamy

Investing in mutual funds can be overwhelming. Earlier, fewer asset management companies (AMCs) were offering multiple products of the same investment style. With more entrants to the business, similar products are offered by more AMCs.

The upshot? Choosing an active fund continues to be difficult. Here, we discuss the difference between investment style and investment strategy. Being mindful of this difference can help in your fund selection process.

Style vs. strategy

Investment style is based on size – large-cap, mid-cap and small-cap stocks. We have intentionally avoided considering value and growth styles, as the definition can be transient given India is an emerging market. Investment strategy refers to the rules or approach a portfolio manager applies to select stocks from the benchmark to create a portfolio.

Consider two funds listed on the SEBI website awaiting approval for a new fund offering (NFO). One is a momentum fund and the other, an innovations fund, both with NSE 500 TRI Index as the benchmark. Both funds regardless of the names ought to have the same investment style; for style is determined by the benchmark. Although the investment strategy of both funds could differ significantly, your selection of a fund must be based on its investment style. Why?

Overlap in portfolios

Innovation fund and momentum fund have the same investable universe – the NSE 500 Index. So, it is possible their portfolios overlap. A company that is innovating could also see its stock is on an uptrend. That is, one fund may pick a stock for its high earnings potential whereas another may pick the same stock based on its momentum. Therefore, one fund need not have a significantly different portfolio compared with another with the same benchmark but with a different investment strategy.

Conclusion

Suppose you already hold active funds in your goal-based (core) portfolios. Then, check whether NFOs or existing funds you want to invest in have the same style benchmark as the funds you currently hold. If they do, it may not be optimal to invest in the NFOs or the existing funds.

If the benchmark is a thematic or strategy benchmark, then check if the index constituents do not significantly overlap with the benchmark of the funds that you already hold. If they do not, invest only if you believe the fund fits with your investment objective.

Investing in funds simply based on their investment strategy may not be really optimal.

(The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments)

Bank Fixed Deposit Rates

Bank Name	Interest Rates (%) Highest Slab	1-year Tenure	3-year Tenure	5-year Tenure
Small Finance Banks				
AU Small Finance Bank	8.00	7.25	7.50	7.25
Equitas Small Finance Bank	8.25	8.10	8.00	7.25
ESAF Small Finance Bank	8.25	6.00	6.75	6.25
Jana Small Finance Bank	8.25	8.25	8.25	8.20
NorthEast Small Finance Bank	9.00	7.00	9.00	6.25
Suryoday Small Finance Bank	8.60	8.05	8.60	8.25
Ujjivan Small Finance Bank	8.25	8.25	7.20	7.20
Unity Small Finance Bank	9.00	7.85	8.15	8.15
Utkarsh Small Finance Bank	8.50	8.00	8.50	7.75
Private Sector Banks				
Axis Bank	7.25	6.70	7.10	7.00
Bandhan Bank	8.05	8.05	7.25	5.85
City Union Bank	7.50	7.00	6.50	6.25
CSB Bank	7.75	5.00	5.75	5.75
DBS Bank	7.50	7.00	6.50	6.50
DCB Bank	8.05	7.10	7.55	7.40
Federal Bank	7.40	7.00	7.10	7.10
HDFC Bank	7.40	6.60	7.00	7.00
ICICI Bank	7.25	6.70	7.00	7.00
IDFC First Bank	7.90	6.50	6.80	6.75
IndusInd Bank	7.99	7.75	7.25	7.25
Jammu & Kashmir Bank	7.00	7.00	6.75	6.50
Karur Vysya Bank	7.60	7.00	7.00	7.00
Karnataka Bank	7.50	7.25	6.50	6.50
Kotak Mahindra Bank	7.40	7.10	7.00	6.20
RBL Bank	8.00	7.50	7.50	7.10
SBM Bank India	7.75	7.05	7.30	7.75
South Indian Bank	7.40	6.70	6.70	6.00
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	7.60	7.00	6.50	6.50
YES Bank	7.75	7.25	7.25	7.25
Public Sector Banks				
Bank of Baroda	7.30	6.85	7.15	6.80
Bank of India	7.30	6.80	6.50	6.00
Bank of Maharashtra	7.35	6.75	6.50	6.50
Canara Bank	7.40	6.85	7.40	6.70
Central Bank of India	7.45	6.85	6.75	6.50
Indian Bank	7.30	6.10	6.25	6.25
Indian Overseas Bank	7.30	7.10	6.50	6.50
Punjab National Bank	7.25	6.80	7.00	6.50
Punjab & Sind Bank	7.45	6.30	6.00	6.00
State Bank of India	7.25	6.80	6.75	6.50
Union Bank of India	7.30	6.80	6.70	6.50

Home Loan Interest Rates

Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.) Upto 30 lakh	Above 30 lakh & upto 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh
			(In %)
Public Sector Banks			
State Bank of India	8.50-9.85	8.50-9.85	8.50-9.85
Bank of Baroda	8.40-10.65	8.40-10.65	8.40-10.90
Union Bank of India	8.30-10.75	8.30-10.90	8.30-10.90
Punjab National Bank	8.45-10.25	8.40-10.15	8.40-10.15
Bank of India	8.35-10.85	8.35-10.85	8.35-11.10
Canara Bank	8.50-11.25	8.45-11.25	8.40-11.15
UCO Bank	8.30 onwards	8.30 onwards	8.30 onwards
Bank of Maharashtra	8.35-11.15	8.35-11.15	8.35-11.15
Punjab and Sind Bank	8.50-10.00	8.50-10.00	8.50-10.00
Indian Overseas Bank	8.40-11.00	8.40-11.00	8.40-11.00
Indian Bank	8.40-10.30	8.40-10.30	8.40-10.30
Private Sector Banks			
Kotak Mahindra Bank	8.75 onwards	8.75 onwards	8.75 onwards
ICICI Bank	8.75 onwards	8.75 onwards	8.75 onwards
Axis Bank	8.75-13.30	8.75-13.30	8.75-9.65
HSBC Bank	8.50 onwards	8.50 onwards	8.50 onwards
South Indian Bank	8.50 onwards	8.50 onwards	8.50 onwards
Karur Vysya Bank	9.00-11.05	9.00-11.05	9.00-11.05
Karnataka Bank	8.75-10.87	8.75-10.87	8.75-10.87
Federal Bank	8.80 onwards	8.80 onwards	8.80 onwards
Dhanlaxmi Bank	8.60 onwards	8.60 onwards	8.60 onwards
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	8.60-9.95	8.60-9.95	8.60-9.95
Bandhan Bank	9.16-15.00	9.16-13.33	9.16-13.33
RBL Bank	9.00 onwards	9.00 onwards	9.00 onwards
CSB Bank	10.49-12.34	10.49-12.34	10.49-12.34
HDFC Bank Ltd.	8.75 onwards	8.75 onwards	8.75 onwards
City Union Bank	8.25-9.50	8.50-10.00	8.75-10.50
Housing Finance Companies (HFCs)			
LIC Housing Finance	8.50 onwards	8.50 onwards	8.50 onwards
Bajaj Housing Finance	8.50 onwards	8.50 onwards	8.50 onwards
Tata Capital	8.75 onwards	8.75 onwards	8.75 onwards
PNB Housing Finance	8.50-14.50	8.50-14.50	8.50-11.45
GIC Housing Finance	8.80 onwards	8.80 onwards	8.80 onwards
SMFG India Home Finance	10.00 onwards	10.00 onwards	10.00 onwards
Aditya Birla Capital	8.60 onwards	8.60 onwards	8.60 onwards
ICICI Home Finance	9.30 onwards	9.30 onwards	9.30 onwards
Godrej Housing Finance	8.55 onwards	8.55 onwards	8.55 onwards

Rates as on January 2 — Source:Paisabazaar.com

WEST PALM BEACH

Italian Prime Minister Meloni meets Trump at Florida resort

REUTERS

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni flew to Florida to meet with U.S. President-elect Donald Trump on Saturday, as the key European leader sought to buttress ties with Mr. Trump before his inauguration on January 20. She is also scheduled to meet Joe Biden during a visit to Rome from Thursday to January 12. REUTERS

ATHENS

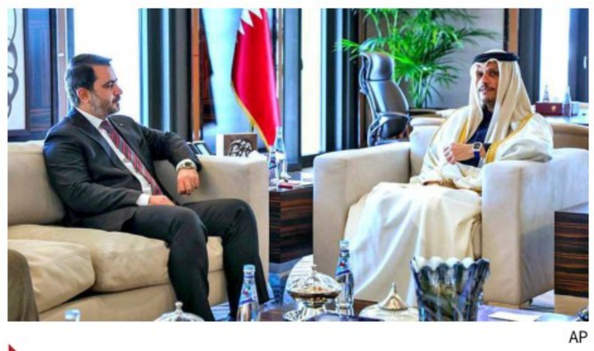
Costas Simitis, former Greek PM and socialist leader, dies at 88

AP

Costas Simitis, former Prime Minister of Greece and the architect of the country's joining the common European currency, the euro, has died at age 88. He served as the Prime Minister from 1996 to 2004. He also helped secure the 2004 Olympic Games for Athens and presided over a vast program of infrastructure building. AP

DAMASCUS

Syria's new Foreign Minister visits Qatar to develop stronger relations



AP

Syria's new Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shibani met with his Qatari counterpart and Qatar's Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani in Doha on Sunday, as Syria's new de facto authorities under Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, or HTS, establish diplomatic ties with regional and global governments. AP

ISLAMABAD

World Bank to approve $20 billion lending package for Pakistan

REUTERS

The World Bank is set to approve a $20 billion indicative lending package for Pakistan – a 10-year initiative to protect its funded projects from political transitions. It will will focus on reducing child stunting, combating learning poverty, enhancing climate resilience, and boosting private investment among others. PTI

Dhaka, India exchange detained fishermen

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

India and Bangladesh on Sunday exchanged fishermen who were detained by both sides over the past three months. Bangladesh Coast Guard received 90 Bangladeshi fishermen, and the Indian Coast Guard received 95 Indian fishermen. India returned two fishing vessels belonging to Bangladesh and six Indian fishing vessels were returned by Bangladesh as part of the exchange held near the western International Maritime Boundary Line. The detentions took place despite India and Bangladesh agreeing on Maritime Boundary in 2014.

Bangladesh cancels visit of judicial officers under pact between India and Hasina govt.

The move comes against the backdrop of Dhaka seeking the extradition of the deposed PM who has sought refuge in India after regime change; under the programme, training for officials of the Bangladesh judiciary would have been provided at National Judicial Academy in Bhopal

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

Bangladesh on Sunday cancelled the visit by a delegation of its judicial officials to India. In a circular, the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs said the visit of the officials who were scheduled to attend a training programme in Bhopal between February 10 and 20 has been cancelled. The cancellation is being interpreted as a hint that Bangladesh will reconsider some of the agreements and MoUs that were signed during the Hasina era as the training of judicial officials was part of one such bilateral MoU.

Past deal: The agreement was part of the 22 MoUs signed when Sheikh Hasina visited India in 2017. FILE PHOTO

According to state-owned news agency *UNB*, 50 officials were granted permission on December 30, 2024, to attend the training module in Bhopal. The nominated officials were chosen from a list of Assistant Judges, Senior Assistant Judges, Joint District and Sessions Judges, Additional District and Sessions Judges, District and Sessions Judges and other serving officials.

The letter of approval had mentioned that the training module was being financed by the Government of India and that the Government of Bangladesh was not expected to finance the training module. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had visited India between April 7 and 10 in 2017, when the two sides had signed twenty-two agreements. The MoU between the National Judicial Academy, India, and the Supreme Court of Bangladesh on Training and Capacity Building Programme for Bangladeshi Judicial Officers in India was one of these MoUs.

Under this programme, training for officials of Bangladesh judiciary would have been provided at the National Judicial Academy in Bhopal as part of improving capacity and expertise of Bangladesh judiciary.

However, the latest development comes against the backdrop of the continued deadlock between Dhaka and New Delhi over the presence of deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Indian territory.

Bangladesh has been seeking the extradition of Ms. Hasina as dozens of cases have been filed against her by the victims of the police crackdown of July and August 2024. India has acknowledged that Dhaka has sent a *note verbale* seeking the extradition of Ms. Hasina but has not conveyed what it plans to do regarding the request. Since coming to power, the interim government has been saying that it will review and if necessary cancel some of the agreements that Ms. Hasina had signed with India.

180 million denied voting rights: Dhaka election body

Press Trust of India
DHAKA

Bangladesh's Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) AMM Nasir Uddin said almost 180 million have been denied their voting rights and the Election Commission wants to end their deprivation.

The countrywide door-to-door data collection for updating the list of possible voters will start on January 20.

Meanwhile, the EC has decided to investigate irregularities in all previous elections, including the three preceding elections that have been controversial during the Awami League-rule in 2014, 2018 and 2024.

Ukraine launches 'counterattack' in Kursk, says Russia

Agence France-Presse
MOSCOW

Russia said on Sunday that Ukraine had launched a "counterattack" in the western border region of Kursk, where Kyiv's forces began a shock ground offensive last August.

It was not immediately clear how much Ukraine had advanced in the region, but pro-Kremlin military bloggers reported earlier that a powerful new offensive was under way.

The assault comes at a critical juncture in the nearly three-year conflict, with both sides seeking to boost their negotiating hand ahead of U.S. President-elect Donald Trump's return to the White House on January 20.

"At about 9:00 a.m. Moscow time (0600 GMT), in order to halt the advance of Russian troops in the Kursk direction, the enemy launched a counterattack," the Russian Defence Ministry said.

Ukraine used two tanks, a dozen armoured vehicles and a demolition unit in the assault, which was headed towards the village of Berdin – about 15 km northeast of Sudzha, it added.

At least 23 killed in Israeli strikes in Gaza, military hits more than '100 terror targets'

Agence France-Presse
GAZA STRIP

Gaza's civil defence agency reported that Israeli strikes in the Palestinian territory had killed at least 23 people on Sunday, while the military said it had targeted more than "100 terror targets" over the past two days.

At least 11 persons were killed in an air strike on a house in northern Gaza's Sheikh Radwan area in Gaza Strip early on Sunday, civil defence spokesman Mahmud Bassal said, while also adding that the dead included women and children.

"Rescuers are still searching for five persons trapped under the rubble of the house," he said.

Grieving faces: Palestinians mourn their relatives at al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah on Sunday. AP

"Rescuers are using their bare hands because we lack proper equipment," Mr. Bassal said.

Mr. Bassal also accused Israeli forces of "directing violent air strikes on homes where displaced people were sheltering, claiming they were targeting resistance fighters".

In a separate strike, five persons were killed when the house of the Abu Jarbou family was struck in the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza, the civil defence said.

Another strike killed four persons in the town of Jabalia, the agency added.

Two days' strikes

The Israeli military said on Sunday that it had struck more than 100 "terror targets" in the Gaza Strip over the past two days.

Several of the strikes targeted sites from which Palestinian militants had been firing projectiles into Israel in recent days, the military said.

Pro-Turkiye and Kurdish forces face off in Syria, killing 101

Agence France-Presse
BEIRUT

Turkish-back groups captured the cities of Manbij and Tal Rifaat from Syrian Democratic Forces

More than 100 combatants were killed over the last two days in northern Syria in fighting between Turkish-backed groups and Syrian Kurdish forces, a war monitor said on Sunday.

Since the evening of Friday, clashes in several villages around the city of Manbij have left 101 people dead, including 85 members of pro-Turkish groups and 16 from the Kurdish-dominated Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

Turkish-backed factions in northern Syria resumed their fight with the SDF at the same time Islamist-led militants were launching an offensive on November 27 that overthrew Syrian president Bashar al-Assad just 11 days later. They succeeded in capturing the cities of Manbij and Tal Rifaat from the SDF.

Sport

White Pearl wins the HPSL Golconda Oaks

HYDERABAD: The 20-to-1 long shot White Pearl, ridden by Mukesh Kumar, won the HPSL Golconda Oaks (Gr. 2), the main attraction of Sunday's (Jan. 5) races here. The winner is owned by M.A.M. Ramaswamy Chettiar Of Chettinad Charitable Trust and trained by K. Satheesh.

Mukesh positioned his mount in fourth place for most of the race. As they approached the home stretch, this daughter by Sedgefield out of Grey Mist surged ahead on the outside, displaying impressive speed to defeat the first favourite, Maigira.

1. AGOSTINI PLATE (DIV. I) (1,400M): SUN DANCER (S. Saqlain) 1, Clefairy (Deepak) 2, Jungle Girl (Gaurav) 3 and Desert Sultan (Akshay K) 4. 1/2, 1-1/4 and 2. 1m, 28. 61s.₹19 (w), 14, 13 and 14 (p). SHP: 44, THP: 34, SHW: 19 and 44, FP: 163, Q: 128, Tanala: 645. Favourite: Sun Dancer. Owners: M/s. Atul Bhanu Sanghani, Keerthi Narasimhachar, Ketineni Sayaji Rao & Rajesh Sanghani. Trainer: L.D' Silva.

2. ANMOL RATAN PLATE (2,000M): SECRET SAINT (P. Trevor) 1, Yesterday (Surya Prakash) 2, Carnival Lady (Gaurav) 3 and Sugar (Akshay K) 4. 6-3/4, 6-1/2 and 1. 2m, 5.25s. ₹16 (w), 10, 28 and 26 (p). SHP: 71, THP: 49, SHW: 10 and 45, FP: 73, Q: 69, Tanala: 317. Favourite: Secret Saint. Owners: Mrs. Anasuya Gupta rep. A.G. Bloodstock LLP, Ms. Ameeta Mehra, Mr. Shantanu Sharma & Mr. Abhiroop Gupta. Trainer: Bharath Singh.

One for the album: White Pearl's trainer K. Satheesh, left, jockey Mukesh Kumar, HRC chairman R. Surendar Reddy, and HPSL's Prudhvi Raju after the prize-giving ceremony for the HPSL Golconda Oaks. G. RAMAKRISHNA

3. AGOSTINI PLATE (DIV. II) (1,400M): COLT PISTOL (Ajay Kumar) 1, Dream To Fly (Md. Ismail) 2, Nkalanzinzi (P. Ajeeth K) 3 and Varaneek Gold (H.M. Akshay) 4. Not run: N R I Range. 2-1/4, 1-1/4 and Neck, 1m, 26.92s. ₹34 (w), 14, 10 and 13 (p). SHP: 28, THP: 43, SHW: 21 and 11, FP: 92, Q: 38, Tanala: 212. Favourite: Dream To Fly. Owner: Mr. Maddali Sai Kumar. Trainer: G. Shashikanth.

4. DECCAN PRINCE PLATE (DIV. I) (1,200M): MIKIMOTO (Kuldeep Singh Sr.) 1, D Minchu (Deepak) 2, Gatiman (B. Nikhil) 3 and Pontefract (Saqlain) 4. Not run: Minecraft. 3/4, 4 and 1-1/2. 1m, 11.42s. ₹16 (w), 10, 27 and 13 (p). SHP: 94, THP: 33, SHW: 10 and 238, FP: 193, Q: 198, Tanala: 763. Favourite: Mikimoto. Owners: Mr. Rajendran rep. Rapar's Galloping Stars LLP, Mr. Ranga Raju & Mr. Tripuranenivenkata Aditya Chowdary. Trainer: D. Netto.

5. ADALA RAGHAVA REDDY MEMORIAL MILLION (1,400M): PLEASANT STAR (Akshay Kumar) 1, Uchchaihshravas (P. Sai K) 2, Clara (Kuldeep Sr.) 3 and Annhilator (Suraj Narredu) 4. 1/2, 4-1/4 and Short Head. 1m, 25.49s. ₹25 (w), 13, 11 and 12 (p). SHP: 20, THP: 41, SHW: 14 and 14, FP: 79, Q: 29, Tanala: 273. Favourite: Pleasant Star. Owners: M/s. S.R. Sanas, Ashok Ranpise & Dilip R. Thacker. Trainer: M. Srinivas Reddy.

6. GAJASIMHA RAO MEMORIAL CUP (1,400M): HUGH CAPET (Akshay Kumar) 1, Decoy (B.R. Kumar) 2, Dali's Destiny (Trevor) 3 and Barbet (Mukesh) 4. Not run: The Inheritor. 1/2, 2 and 2-1/2. 1m, 25.11s. ₹26 (w), 11, 17 and 15 (p). SHP: 42, THP: 76, SHW: 13 and 26, FP: 123, Q: 72, Tanala: 258. Favourite: Dali's Destiny. Owner: Mr. Subodh Kumar Ananthula. Trainer: G. Sandeep.

7. HPSL GOLCONDA OAKS (GR. 2) (2,400M): WHITE PEARL (SEDGEFIELD-GREY MIST) (MUKESH KUMAR) 1, Maigira (Cougar Mountain-Solar Midnight) (Trevor) 2, Nyx (Dreamfield-Stimulate) (Akshay K) 3 and Freedom Touch (Moonlight Magic-Freedom Of Speech) (Ashad Asbar) 4. 1, 3/4 and 3. 2m, 39.77s. ₹103 (w), 39 and 10 (p). SHP: 28, THP: 36, SHW: 349 and 10, FP: 341, Q: 113, Tanala: 805. Favourite: Maigira. Owner: M.A.M. Ramaswamy Chettiar Of Chettinad Charitable Trust. Trainer: K. Satheesh.

8. DECCAN PRINCE PLATE (DIV. II) (1,200M): LASHKA (P. Trevor) 1, Adbhut (Mohit) 2, Calista Girl (Gaurav) 3 and Runlikethewind (Saqlain) 4. 3-1/4, 1/2 and 3/4. 1m, 10.98s. ₹21 (w), 13, 44 and 19 (p). SHP: 86, THP: 62, SHW: 16 and 44, FP: 371, Q: 303, Tanala: 3,388. Favourite: Lashka. Owners: Col. S.B. Nair & Mr. Aditya P. Thackersey. Trainer: L.V.R. Deshmukh.

NOTE: *Armstrong (P. Sai Kumar up) reared up in the stalls and jumped out riderless. Sai Kumar escaped unhurt. Blazing Gun, ridden by Mukesh, planted in the stalls and did not participate.*

Jackpot: 70%: ₹10,412 (27 tkts.), 30%; 1,912 (63 tkts.).

Mini Jackpot: (i) 227 (232 tkts.), (ii) 18,683 (2 tkts.).

Treble: (i) 127 (215 tkts.), (ii) 146 (119 tkts.), (iii) 1,515 (21 tkts.).

Truth for the feature event

HYDERABAD: Trainer S. Sreekanth's ward Truth, who won well in his last start, should score an encore in the Sri. A.S. Krishna Memorial Cup, the main event of Monday's (Jan. 6) races.

1 ATTRACTRESS PLATE (DIV. II) (1,200m), (Terms) Maiden, 3-y-o only (Cat. II), 12.40 p.m.: 1. Sharanga (5) Abhay Singh 56, 2. Yuvraj (6) Kuldeep Sr. 56, 3. Emerald Touch (1) Ashad Asbar 54.5, 4. Foxy Girl (8)H.M. Akshay 54.5, 5. Misty Night (3) Nakhat 54.5, 6. Pacific Heights (4) Saqlain 54.5, 7. Pride Aside (2) Gaurav 54.5 and 8. Silver Screen (7) Md. Ekram 54.5.

1. PACIFIC HEIGHTS, 2. FOXY GIRL, 3. PRIDE ASIDE

2 ASTONISH PLATE (DIV. II) (1,200m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 1.15: 1. N R I SKYPOWER (9) Santosh Raj 60, 2. Bold Beauty (6) R.S. Bhati 59, 3. Eminency (4) Nakhat 57.5, 4. Morning Mist (10) Deepak 57, 5. Swiss Girl (5) Akshay K 55, 6. Pinatubo (3) Kuldeep Sr. 54.5, 7. Mirzeta (8) Kuldeep Jr. 53.5, 8. Battle On (1) P Sai K 53, 9. Blue Pantheress (7) H.M. Akshay 51.5 and 10. If You Like It (2) B. Nikhil 51.5.

1. BATTLE ON, 2. SWISS GIRL, 3. EMINENCY

3 ATTRACTRESS PLATE (DIV. I) (1,200m), (Terms) Maiden, 3-y-o only, 1.50: 1. Cherie Chevalier (9) P. Sai K 56, 2. True Story (8) Nakhat 56, 3. Divine Faith (4) Abhay Singh 54.5, 4. Double Bubble (3) Kuldeep Sr. 54.5, 5. Honey Luna (5) Akshay K 54.5, 6. La Fleuriere (7) Trevor 54.5, 7. Mexican Wave (6) R.S. Jodha 54.5, 8. Moonlite Rose (2) Saqlain 54.5 and 9. The Purpose (1) Md. Ismail 54.5.

1. CHERIE CHEVALIER, DOUBLE BUBBLE, 3. DIVINE FAITH

4 BRAVE HUNTER CUP (DIV. I) (1,100m), 6-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 2.25: 1. Juramento (3) Uday Kiran 61.5, 2. Winning Attitude (6) Akshay K 59, 3. City Of Blessing (4) Kuldeep Sr. 57.5, 4. Crimson Rose (2) B.R. Kumar 56.5, 5. Mark My Day (5) Nakhat 56, 6. First Class (1) Mukesh 55, 7. Sucker Punch (7) P. Ajeeth K 54.5 and 8. Top In Class (8) P. Sai K 54.5.

1. FIRST CLASS, 2. WINNING ATTITUDE, 3. CRIMSON ROSE

5 ASTONISH PLATE (DIV. I) (1,200m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 3.00: 1. Inderdhanush (2) Deepak 60, 2. Star Cruise (7) P. Sai K 59.5, 3. Lights On (5) Ajay K 57.5, 4. American Flame (8) H.M. Akshay 56.5, 5. Char Ek Char (4) Mohit 55.5, 6. D Battle (3) B.R. Kumar 54.5, 7. Master Touch (6) Mukesh 54.5, 8. Silver Lining (9) Afroz K 53, 9. Glimmer Of Hope (1) Gaurav 52.5 and 10. Reining Queen (10) P. Ajeeth K 51.

1. LIGHTS ON, 2. STAR CRUISE, 3. AMERICAN FLAME

6 SRI A.S. KRISHNA MEMORIAL CUP (2,400m), rated 80 and above (Cat. I), 3.35: 1. Akido (5) R.S. Jodha 62, 2. Siddharth (3) Trevor 62, 3. Truth (1) Akshay K 60.5, 4. Nightmare (6) Mukesh 50, 5. Brooklyn Beauty (2) G. Naresh 50 and 6. Detective (4) Neeraj 50.

1. TRUTH, 2. SIDDHARTH

7 BYERLY TURK MILLION (Gr. 3) (1,200m), (Terms), Fillies 3-y-o only, 4.10: 1. Beverley (4) Saqlain 56, 2. Dontblockmyway (3) Afroz K 56, 3. Gachchhatu (5) Neeraj 56, 4. See The Light (1) Trevor 56, 5. Stars Envied (8) Akshay K 56, 6. Zuza (6) Ashad Asbar 56, 7. Tootsie Darling (2) Surya Prakash 53 and 8. Turiya (7) Mukesh 53.

1. STARS ENVIED, 2. SEE THE LIGHT, 3. ZUZA

8 BRAVE HUNTER CUP (DIV. II) (1,100m), 6-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 4.45: 1. Blissful (5) R.S. Jodha 61, 2. Challenger (3) Nakhat 57.5, 3. Sweet Dancer (8) P. Ajeeth K 58, 4. Mr. Perfect (2) Mohit 56.5, 5. Morior Invictus (6) Surya Prakash 56, 6. Sopranos (7) P. Sai K 54, 7. Wind Sprite (4) Afroz K 54 and 8. Classical Music (1) H.M. Akshay 50.

1. CHALLENGER, 2. SWEET DANCER, 3. SOPRANOS

Day's Best: **TRUTH**

Jackpot: 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8.

Mini Jackpot: (i) 2, 3, 4 & 5, (ii) 5, 6, 7 & 8.

Treble: (i) 1, 2 & 3, (ii) 3, 4 & 5, (iii) 6, 7 & 8.

Tanala: All races.

PEEVED

Gavaskar upset at not being invited to present trophy

FILE PHOTO

Indian legend Sunil Gavaskar expressed displeasure at not being invited to present the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. "I am here on the ground. To me it should not matter that Australia won when it comes to the presentation. They played better cricket. Would have been happy to present the trophy with my good friend Border."

HARD GAME

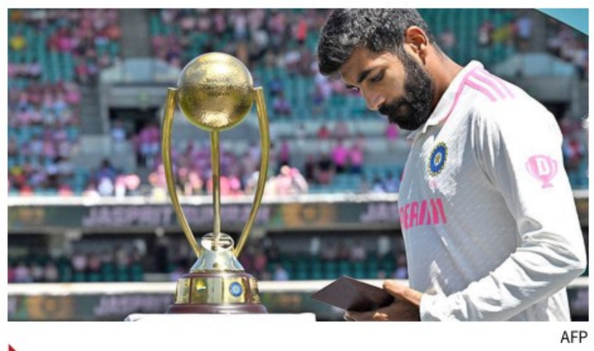
It's a tough sport, can't be that soft: Gambhir on the Konstas row

AP

"It's a tough sport played by tough men. It can't be that soft. He (Sam Konstas) had no right to be talking to Jasprit Bumrah when Usman Khawaja was taking time," India head coach Gautam Gambhir on accusation of intimidatory tactics raised by Australian coach Andrew McDonald.

ALL-TIME BEST

Bumrah made batting look so much harder, says Ponting



AFP

ICC Hall of Famer Ricky Ponting believes that Jasprit Bumrah's exploits are not only the best he's seen of a visiting bowler in Australia but probably the best fast-bowling display of all time. "When you watched him (Bumrah) bowl compared to anyone else in the series, he made batting look so much harder," said Ponting.

STAYING AFLOAT

Masood and Babar lead fightback after Pakistan follows on

AP

Pakistan was 213 for one after following on on the third day of the second and final Test against South Africa in Cape Town on Sunday. The visiting side was earlier bowled out for 194 before captain Shan Masood, *in pic.*, (102 batting) and Babar Azam (81) led the fightback. **The scores:** South Africa 615 vs Pakistan 194 & 213/1.

Australia tames India, regains Border-Gavaskar Trophy

Boland returns a match haul of 10/76; the visitor sorely misses Bumrah as cameos by Khawaja, Head and Webster help the host chase down the target of 162 in just 27 overs on the third afternoon

IND IN AUS

K.C. Vijaya Kumar
SYDNEY

One man's absence was massively felt. Jasprit Bumrah has been a central thread binding together the Border-Gavaskar Trophy series, influencing its every twist and turn. But once the Indian skipper and spearhead grappled with a back spasm, the visitor was down for the count.

In a contest of fine margins, Australia prevailed with two days to spare. On the third day, after bowling out India for 157 in its second innings and chasing 162 for a triumph, the host posted 162 for four.

The six-wicket victory in the fifth and final Test at the Sydney Cricket Ground here on Sunday afternoon, helped Pat Cummins and his men reclaim the Border-Gavaskar Trophy with a 3-1 margin.

Australia's pursuit flourished initially as both Mohammed Siraj and Prasidh Krishna were guilty of bowling wayward lines.

The odd half-volley was peddled too and Siraj's first over went for 13. India acutely missed Bumrah, who witnessed the meltdown from the pavilion.

In a low-scoring game, the last thing a fielding captain needs is a wide going for four byes. And it all happened while Sam Konstas tucked into Siraj. The impetuous opener, however, failed to restrain himself against Prasidh and a miscued hoick offered India an opportunity.

Australia 39 for one with Usman Khawaja and Marnus Labuschagne pressing forward. The latter struck a four off Prasidh and then got a touch too ambitious and lashed one to an alert Yashasvi Jaiswal at gully.

Steep bounce

Next man Steve Smith with his exaggerated shuffle across the stumps tried to linger but when Prasidh extracted steep bounce, the former Australian captain got into a tangle and popped one towards a diving Jaiswal. Australia 58 for three and hope stirred within the Indian ranks.

Mission accomplished: Cummins and Co. ended a 10-year wait to lay their hands on the trophy. AFP

But there were no further alarms till lunch and the host was placed on 71. After the break, Khawaja and Travis Head motored on.

The former hit two past the ropes but against the run of play, his half-hearted pull off Siraj yielded an edge. Australia 104 for four and very much in the saddle. Head and Beau Webster then sauntered towards the target. Travis drove and hustled, Webster pulled with ease and when he drilled Washington Sundar down the ground for four and clenched his fist, Australia was home. In the morning, and at a venue awash in the pink shade as a tribute to the McGrath Foundation's cancer awareness drive, India resumed at the overnight 141 for six, and lasted a mere 8.5 overs.

Ravindra Jadeja, after punching Cummins for four, nibbled at another delivery and watched the ball sail into Alex Carey's gloves. And Siraj walked in as Bumrah preferred to rest his back.

No clue

Meanwhile, Washington had no clue to a Cummins stump-destroyer, more a missile than a delivery, and India was gasping.

Finally Bumrah strode towards the pitch while Siraj fidgeted around. The latter edged and left, the former took a wild swipe.

An edge was brushed, stumps were knocked and Scott Boland had six wickets in his kitty. This was Australia's Sunday.

SCOREBOARD

INDIA — 1ST INNINGS
185 in 72.2 overs
AUSTRALIA — 1ST INNINGS
181 in 51 overs
INDIA — 2ND INNINGS
Yashasvi Jaiswal b Boland 22 (*35b, 4x4*), K.L. Rahul b Boland 13 (*20b, 2x4*), Shubman Gill c Carey b Webster 13 (*15b, 2x4*), Virat Kohli c Smith b Boland 6 (*12b, 1x4*), Rishabh Pant c Carey b Cummins 61 (*33b, 6x4, 4x6*), Ravindra Jadeja c Carey b Cummins 13 (*45b, 2x4*), Nitish Kumar Reddy c Cummins b Boland 4 (*21b*), Washington Sundar b Cummins 12 (*43, 1x4*), Mohammed Siraj c Khawaja b Boland 4 (*11b*), Jasprit Bumrah b Boland 0 (*3b*), Prasidh Krishna (not out) 1 (*1b*); Extras (b-4, lb-4): 8; Total (in 39.5 overs): 157.
FALL OF WICKETS
1-42 (Rahul, 7.3 overs), 2-47 (Jaiswal, 9.5), 3-59 (Kohli, 13.1), 4-78 (Gill, 15.2), 5-124 (Pant, 22.2), 6-129 (Nitish, 27.3), 7-147 (Jadeja, 34.4), 8-156 (Washington, 38.4), 9-156 (Siraj, 39.3).
AUSTRALIA BOWLING
Starc 4-0-36-0, Cummins 15-4-44-3, Boland 16.5-5-45-6, Webster 4-1-24-1.
AUSTRALIA — 2ND INNINGS
Sam Konstas c Washington b Prasidh 22 (*17b, 3x4*), Usman Khawaja c Pant b Siraj 41 (*45b, 4x4*), Marnus Labuschagne c Jaiswal b Prasidh 6 (*20b, 1x4*), Steve Smith c Jaiswal b Prasidh 4 (*9b*), Travis Head (not out) 34 (*38b, 4x4*), Beau Webster (not out) 39 (*34b, 6x4*). Extras (b-5, lb-2, w-8, nb-1): 16; Total (for four wkts., in 27 overs): 162.
FALL OF WICKETS
1-39 (Konstas, 3.5), 2-52 (Labuschagne, 7.6), 3-58 (Smith, 9.6), 4-104 (Khawaja, 18.1).
INDIA BOWLING
Siraj 12-1-69-1, Prasidh 12-0-65-3, Nitish 2-0-10-0, Washington 1-0-11-0.
Australia won by six wickets and clinched the five-match series 3-1.
Player-of-the-Match: Boland.
Player-of-the-Series: Bumrah.

Pumped up: Debutant Webster exults after hitting the winning boundary. AP

Aussies set up WTC title clash with SA

K.C. Vijaya Kumar
SYDNEY

Inside the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG), children ran in that fumbling, happy way. The more adventurous ones did the odd somersault. Some of the Australian cricketers were lying sprawled on the grass, allowing all that ecstasy and relief to seep into them while their families hung around.

Beau Webster, with a lovely debut under his belt, stood close to the pitch and posed with his family for pictures. Pat Cummins and his men were in a happy space. And there was double joy to be savoured. Besides defeating India 3-1 to pocket the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, Australia also sealed a berth in the ICC World Test Championship (WTC) final at Lord's in June, later this year.

Lankan hopes dashed

With South Africa having already qualified, the tussle for the second berth was between India and Australia. If the visitor had won at Sydney, then the subsequent series involving Australia and host Sri Lanka, would have had a bearing on the second finalist.

But with a favourable verdict in the fifth Test at the SCG, Cummins and his men will get to defend the title they won in the 2021-23 cycle.

Australia has 63.73 percentage points now and is well ahead of India's 50.

Meanwhile, India, after having qualified twice for the WTC final and suffering losses to New Zealand and Australia respectively in those summit clashes, will miss the bus.

Reflecting on the spot in the WTC final, Cummins said: "It's huge for us, we talk about the World Test Championship a lot. It's a trophy we are really proud to hold so we want to go back and defend it. To play well consistently across different conditions and against different teams, yeah it's great, can't wait to get over there."

Rohit and Kohli will plan in Indian cricket's best interest: Gambhir

K.C. Vijaya Kumar
SYDNEY

Twice over seven days, Gautam Gambhir has turned up for press conferences. The first time, he did not commit on whether Rohit Sharma, the regular captain, would play. And during the second time he met the media at the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) here on Sunday, the Indian coach refused to reveal a clear roadmap for seniors Rohit and Virat Kohli.

"I can't talk about the future of any player, it's up to them. But yes, they still have the hunger, they still have the passion, they are tough people and, hopefully, they can continue to take Indian cricket forward but ultimately as we all know, whatever they plan, they will plan for the best interest of Indian cricket," Gambhir said.

A letdown: Rohit and Kohli failed to make a big impact in the series. FILE PHOTO: K. MURALI KUMAR

When pressed about Rohit opting out of the fifth Test, Gambhir replied: "First of all, so many reports were written. We can be a little more sensible. If a leader has taken this decision, I don't think there is any problem. We talked about accountability and that starts from the top and Rohit started that in the match."

Reflecting on the series loss against Australia, Gambhir said: "I don't want to say that because Jasprit Bumrah wasn't there we couldn't get the results. We had some moments and it would have been nice if he was there, but we still had five bowlers and a good team is one which is not dependent on one individual. We had our moments in this series. That last session in Melbourne, if we had played well and were at 1-1, the pressure on Australia would have been greater. Here in the second innings, if we left a target of 250 to 300, things would have been difficult."

Gambhir drew heart from the performance of youngsters like Yashasvi Jaiswal, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Washington Sundar and Akash Deep. The coach termed Bumrah as 'outstanding' and praised Mohammed Siraj: "The attitude of Siraj was outstanding. I don't remember a guy who has run in (hard) for every ball despite at times not being 100 per cent fit."

Gambhir also batted for domestic cricket: "I would like everyone to play domestic cricket. If you don't give importance to domestic cricket, you will never get the players you want in Test cricket."

'Message was to stay strong after Perth'

K.C. Vijaya Kumar
SYDNEY

A wide grin plastered on his face, Pat Cummins strode into the press-conference hall at the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) here on Sunday. Looking at the just concluded Border-Gavaskar Trophy series, the Australian captain said: "It is a huge win. I felt it was kind of seesawing throughout the whole series, so to finish it at 3-1 and to hold the trophy is an amazing feeling." Reflecting on the last few months, Cummins said: "We grew up watching Test cricket, loving it, so to be right in the mix, you wouldn't want to be anywhere else in the world for these couple of months."

With Virat Kohli probably having played his last set of Tests in Australia, Cummins was quick to praise: "It has always been a wonderful contest (against him). More than just the runs that he brings to the game, it is also the debate he stirs, sometimes it can roil you as an opposition, which I am sure is part of his plans. It will be a shame if he doesn't play any more Tests here."

Asked about the turnaround after the loss in the first Test at Perth, Cummins said: "We always knew we had a good team. The message was to stay strong. To get the selections right."

The host skipper praised his team, especially key players like Scott Boland and debutant Beau Webster.

As for the imminent tour of Sri Lanka, Cummins hinted that he might skip as he is expecting his second child: "Becky's (his wife) hanging on at the moment, so we will play it by ear. But I think, mostly I might struggle to get over there (Sri Lanka)."

United holds Liverpool in four-goal thriller

Agencies
LIVERPOOL

Amad Diallo struck a late equaliser as Manchester United made a mockery of its recent form to hold Premier League leader Liverpool to a thrilling 2-2 draw at Anfield on Sunday.

It looked as though Ruben Amorim's United would go home empty-handed despite a vastly-improved display but Diallo swept in a shot in the 80th minute to earn his side a point.

United had gone ahead in the 52nd minute when Lisandro Martinez powered home a ferocious shot from a tight angle.

But an off-key Liverpool responded seven minutes later with Cody Gakpo curling home a stunning equaliser before Mohamed Salah put the hosts ahead from the penalty spot.

Liverpool has 46 points from 19 games, six more than Arsenal, while United moved up a place to 13th with 23 points.

On Saturday, Arsenal's Premier League title challenge was dealt another seismic blow as Joao Pedro's penalty secured a 1-1 draw for Brighton.

Mikel Arteta's attacking options were limited by illness and injury but 17-year-old Ethan Nwaneri took his chance to shine with a composed finish to put the visitors in front.

However, Arsenal saw two vital points slip away when William Saliba was harshly punished for a clash of heads with Joao Pedro and the Brazilian slotted home the resulting spot-kick.

Napoli took advantage of its Serie A title rival competing in the Italian Super Cup by beating Fiorentina 3-0 on Saturday to move top of the pile.

The results: Premier League: Fulham 2 (Jimenez 69-pen, 90+1-pen) drew with Ipswich 2 (Szmodics 38, Delap 71-pen); Liverpool 2 (Gakpo 59, Salah 70-pen) drew with Manchester United 2 (Martinez 52, Diallo 80).

On Saturday: Brighton 1 (Joao Pedro 61-pen) drew with Arsenal 1 (Nwaneri 18).

Serie A: Fiorentina 0 lost to Napoli 3 (Neres 29, Lukaku 54-pen, McTominay 68).

The leveller: Diallo's shot squirms its way past the Liverpool defence. AFP

INBRIEF

Gauff and Fritz deliver for U.S. in the final against Poland

Coco Gauff roared past Iga Swiatek to inspire Team USA before Taylor Fritz sealed the United Cup title with victory over Poland's Hubert Hurkacz in Sydney on Sunday. Gauff opened with a statement 6-4, 6-4 win over Swiatek in one hour and 51 minutes to fire a warning shot ahead of the Australian Open. Big-serving Fritz then battled through against Hurkacz 6-4, 5-7, 7-6(4) to spark wild celebrations as the Americans won the mixed team cup for the second time in three years after winning the inaugural one in 2023. Poland fell at the final hurdle again after losing to Germany 12 months ago.

Sabalenka, Lehecka emerge champions in Brisbane

World No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka enjoyed the perfect warm-up for next week's Australian Open when she downed Russian qualifier Polina Kudermetova to win the Brisbane International on Sunday. In the men's final, 21-year-old Czech Jiri Lehecka claimed his second ATP title when his American opponent Reilly Opelka pulled out with a wrist injury while trailing 1-4.

Tanisha and Mita star in Team 'B's win over Team 'A'

Half-centuries from Tanisha Singh (90) and Mita Paul (57) set up a 38-run victory for Team 'B' over Team 'A' in the BCCI Senior Women's one-day Challenger Trophy in Chennai on Sunday.

The scores: Team 'B' 282/8 in 50 overs (Jincy George 37, Tanisha Singh 90, Mita Paul 57, M. Mamatha 37 n.o., Sonia Mendhiya 3/41) bt Team 'A' 244 in 42.4 overs (Shafali Verma 91, Tanusree Sarkar 36, Shipra Giri 51, Radha Yadav 3/50, Saranya Gadwal 3/49).
Team 'D' 211/9 in 50 overs (Anushka Sharma 40, Kanika Ahuja 35, Monica Patel 48 n.o.) bt Team 'C' 191/9 in 50 overs (Tripti Singh 30, Riya Chaudhary 45 n.o., Yasha Sri 34).

LIVE TELECAST

South Africa vs Pakistan: 2nd Test, day 4, JioCinema, 2 p.m.
ISL: Sports 18-3 & JioCinema, 7.30 p.m.
Hockey: HIL, DD Sports, Sony Sports Ten 1, 2, 3 (SD & HD) & LIV, 8.15 p.m.

Mumbai fails to advance despite thumping victory over Saurashtra

Mhatre dazzles with a 148 in the 290-run chase as the side gets a five-wicket win; Karnataka and Punjab qualify from Group C

In top gear: Mhatre smashed 13 fours and nine sixes in his knock. VIJAY SONEJI

HAZARE TROPHY

Anish Pathiyil
AHMEDABAD

Ayush Mhatre's youthful flamboyance helped Mumbai round out its Vijay Hazare Trophy campaign with a five-wicket win over Saurashtra here on Sunday. However, victories for Karnataka and Punjab in their respective Group C encounters meant Mumbai failed to advance to the knockout stage.

The 17-year-old Mhatre played a stroke-filled innings (148, 93b, 13x4, 9x6), finding boundaries across the ground to help his team overcome the 290-run target with four overs to spare.

Mhatre took on the opening bowlers in the first PowerPlay, peppering the gaps with front-foot drives and back-foot punches to get his side off to a quick start. His partner, Jay Bista played the perfect second fiddle (45, 46b, 4x4), looking to give the strike back to the young batter, forging a mammoth 141-run partnership off just 106 balls.

After Bista's dismissal, Mhatre continued his relentless attack at the other end, bringing up his second List-A hundred off just 67 balls, before nicking one to the keeper off Chirag Jani. Following his dismissal, the middle-order perished looking to complete the chase in haste, before skipper Shreyas Iyer took the team across the line to record its fifth win in the tournament.

Earlier, Saurashtra was off to a flier after being put in to bat. Tarang Gohel's early onslaught (44, 21b, 8x4, 1x6), where he put away anything full from the pacers, propelled the team to 49 at the end of three overs.

Shreyas turned to the part-time off-spin of Siddesh Lad, which proved to be a masterstroke as the 32-year-old picked three wickets in a trice to reduce the side to 68 for four.

Vishvaraj Jadeja (92,110b, 8x4, 3x6) and Chirag (83, 98b, 8x4, 1x6) set out on a rebuild job, treading cautiously against the eight-bowling option employed by Mumbai. The pair rotated strike after the field spread, managing to find a few boundaries in between to record a 148-run partnership off 182 balls. But once the duo fell, the innings stumbled in pursuit of acceleration, eventually ending at 289, which proved to be insufficient.

HAZARE TROPHY SCORES - FINAL ROUND

Group-A: Jaipur: Uttarakhand 310/8 in 50 overs (R. Samarth 113, Kunal Chandela 46, Aditya Tare 81 n.o., Darshan Rajbongshi 3/65) lost to Assam 312/4 in 49.1 overs (Rishav Das 58, Sumit Ghadigaonkar 65, Sibsankar Roy 71 n.o., Denish Das 61). **Toss:** Assam; **Points:** Assam 4(12), Uttarakhand 0(12).

Jharkhand 320/7 in 50 overs (Utkarsh Singh 102, Ishan Kishan 48, Kumar Kushagra 78) bt Goa 289/9 in 50 overs (Darshan Misal 151 n.o., Mohit Redkar 61, Anukul Roy 4/57). **Toss:** Jharkhand; **Jharkhand 4(16), Goa 0(12).**

Manipur 210/9 in 50 overs (Rex Rajkumar 101, Sultan Karim 52, Sumit Kumar 3/22) lost to Haryana 214/4 in 34.2 overs (Himanshu Rana 65, Ankit Kumar 63, Bishworjit Konthoujam 4/48). **Toss:** Manipur; **Haryana 4(24), Manipur 0(0).**

Gujarat 252 in 47.5 overs (Urvil Patel 45, Hemang Patel 48, Ravi Bishnoi 40, Tapas Das 3/54) bt Odisha 152 in 38.2 overs (Sandeep Pattnaik 42, Abhishek Raut 48, Chintan Gaja 3/28, Ravi Bishnoi 4/17). **Toss:** Odisha; **Gujarat 4(28), Odisha 0(8).**

Group-B: Mumbai: Andhra 197 in 49.2 overs (Bodhala Kumar 44, Mayank Dagar 3/32) lost to Himachal Pradesh 201/2 in 38.1 overs (Ankit Kalsi 100 n.o., Rishi Dhawan 45 n.o.). **Toss:** HP; **HP 4(16), Andhra 0(16).**

Railways 284/7 in 50 overs (Suraj Ahuja 55, Sahab Yuvraj Singh 79, Ashutosh Sharma 47, Pradeep Dadhe 3/76) bt Maharashtra 252 in 49.4 overs (Ankit Bawne 64, Nikhil Naik 41, Purnank Tyagi 5/57). **Toss:** Maharashtra; **Railways 4(20), Maharashtra 0(24).**

Navi Mumbai: Sikkim 275/5 in 50 overs (Ashish Thapa 73, Parth Palawat 80) bt Rajasthan 269 in 50 overs (Kartik Sharma 45, Rishit Saini 49, Manav Suthar 57, Kukna Ajay Singh 56, Ankur Malik 4/35). **Toss:** Rajasthan; **Sikkim 4(8), Rajasthan 0(20).**

Meghalaya 82 in 28 overs (Arun Bamal 3/10, Arjun Sharma 3/21) lost to Services 88/3 in 17.4. **Toss:** Meghalaya; **Services 4(8), Meghalaya 0(0).**

Group-C: Ahmedabad: Arunachal Pradesh 96 in 28.3 overs (Aniketh Reddy 4/14, Tanay Thyagarajan 5/32) lost to Hyderabad 100/2 in 12 overs. **Toss:** Hyderabad; **Hyderabad 4(16), Arunachal 0(0).**

Punjab 338/9 in 50 overs (Abhishek Sharma 51, Anmolpreet Singh 60, Nehal Wadhera 57, Naman Dhir 55, Anmol Malhotra 66, Gaurav Yadav 4/82) bt Pondicherry 171 in 34.4 overs (Aman Khan 52, Arshdeep Singh 4/19, Raghu Sharma 4/37). **Toss:** Pondicherry; **Punjab 4(24), Pondicherry 0(12).**

Saurashtra 289 in 50 overs (Tarang Gohel 44, Vishvaraj Jadeja 92, Chiraj Jani 83, Siddhesh Lad 3/33, Suryansh Shedge 4/35) lost to Mumbai 290/5 in 46 overs (Ayush Mhatre 148, Jay Bista 45). **Toss:** Mumbai; **Mumbai 4(20), Saurashtra 0(12).**

Nagaland 206 in 48.3 in overs (Rongsen Jonathan 51, Chetan Bist 77 n.o., Shreyas Gopal 4/24) lost to Karnataka 207/1 in 37.5 overs (Mayank Agarwal 116 n.o., KV Aneesh 82 n.o.). **Toss:** Karnataka; **Karnataka 4(24), Nagaland 0(4).**

Group-D: Vizianagaram: Tamil Nadu 301 in 50 overs (B. Indrajith 75, Vijay Shankar 71, Harsh Yadav 4/68) bt Chhattisgarh 228 in 46 overs (Bupen Lalwani 54, Ashutosh Singh 71, Varun Chakravarthy 3/34). **Toss:** Chhattisgarh; **TN 4(18), Chhattisgarh 0(10).**

Mizoram 72 in 22.1 overs (Harsh Dubey 4/20) lost to Vidarbha 73 in 8.5 overs (Apoorv Wankhade 50 n.o.). **Toss:** Vidarbha; **Vidarbha 4(24), Mizoram 0(2).**

Visakhapatnam: Jammu & Kashmir 285/8 in 50 overs (Shubham Khajuria 72, Sahil Lotra 40, Abid Mushtaq 53 n.o., Nishunk Birla 3/24) lost to Chandigarh 291/3 in 42.5 overs (Manan Vohra 107, Tushar Joshi 131). **Toss:** J & K; **Chandigarh 4(10), J & K 0(6).**

Group-E: Hyderabad: Delhi 180 in 38.3 in overs (Arpit Rana 75, Mahesh Pithiya 3/35) lost to Baroda 181/5 in 47.2 overs (Shashwat Rawat 41, Ayush Badoni 3/29). **Toss:** Delhi; **Baroda 4(20), Delhi 0(12).**

Bengal 269/7 in 50 overs (Sudip Gharami 99, Sudip Chatterjee 47, Mohammed Shami 42) lost to Madhya Pradesh 271/4 in 46.2 overs (Shubham Sharma 99, Rajat Patidar 132 n.o.). **Toss:** MP; **MP 4(14), Bengal 0(18).**

Kerala 266/8 in 50 overs (Mohammed Azharuddeen 88, Salman Nizar 52, Akhil Scaria 54, Prashant Singh 3/66, Sakibul Gani 3/56) bt Bihar 133 in 41.2 overs (Aditya Sarwate 3/23, Abdul Basith 3/20). **Toss:** Bihar; **Kerala 4(10), Bihar 0(4).**

The final phase:
Pre-quarterfinals: Jan. 9: Haryana vs Bengal (PQF1), Rajasthan vs Tamil Nadu (PQF2); **Quarterfinals: Jan. 11:** Maharashtra vs Punjab (QF3), Karnataka vs Baroda (QF4); **Jan. 12:** Gujarat vs winner of PQF1 (QF1), Vidarbha vs winner of PQF2 (QF2).

Semifinals: Jan. 15: Winner of QF1 vs QF4; **Jan. 16:** Winner of QF2 vs QF3; **Final: Jan. 18.** *All matches at Vadodara.*

Nine-man Kerala Blasters edges past Punjab

ISL

Vivek Krishnan
NEW DELHI

Despite two second-half sending-offs that saw Kerala Blasters finish the Indian Super League (ISL) clash against Punjab FC with nine players, it was able to eke out a 1-0 win at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here on Sunday.

Noah Sadaoui's 44th-minute strike was the difference between the two teams.

The result: Punjab FC 0 lost to Kerala Blasters 1 (Noah Sadaoui 44).

It brings back the spotlight to the sport: Anand on Gukesh's World title

CHESS

N. Sudarshan
BENGALURU

In mid-December, with the World Chess Championship match tied at 6.5-6.5 after 13 games, D. Gukesh and Ding Liren had seemingly fought each other to a standstill even in the 14th outing.

Gukesh had started thinking about a potential tie-breaker when a rook blunder from the defending champion let in that ray of light the Indian, until then, had no hope of finding.

Since then, that brilliant shaft has morphed into a kind of eternal sunshine, and on a crisp winter Sunday at the Good Shepherd Auditorium, scores of fans, predominantly children and enthusiastic parents, basked under it.

"It brings back the spotlight to chess," said five-time World Champion Viswanathan Anand of Gukesh's win, at the celebratory programme organised by WestBridge Capital.

"It's possible that at every single tournament there is an Indian playing, whom you can look forward to watching. Imagine every morning you wake up and see a tournament and there is something to root for. The audience numbers are very good; we have regular broadcast... a lot of the dots have been connected.

Two stars: Gukesh and Anand share a lighter moment at the celebratory function. SUDHAKARA JAIN

"These players [Gukesh, R. Praggnanandhaa etc.] have all grown up together. The rivalry is also there along with the friendship. They seem genuinely happy for each other, but they are very motivated to achieve the same thing or take it even higher. If this continues, it is fantastic for India," Anand added.

Anand also praised Gukesh's persistence against Liren. "Gukesh never really changed the strategy of pushing. Unexpected things happened during the match, but he was there the next day, pushing again. The rook [blunder] didn't happen in a vacuum".

Gukesh, who was chosen for Indian sport's ultimate honour, the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna award, last Thursday, soaked in all the applause, but already had his eyes set on the future.

"2025 will be very tough," he said. "I am very happy about the World Championship win, but that is in the past. I have started thinking about new goals. I want to continue to give my best, keep improving and win as many tournaments as possible. It will be a fun year with a lot of learnings, and hopefully a lot of good results".

Equaliser: Torre celebrates Soorma's goal. BISWARANJAN ROUT

Soorma pip Lancers in seven-goal thriller

Y.B. Sarangi
ROURKELA

Seasoned Belgian custodian Vincent Vanasch stood out with his clinical saves as Soorma Club rallied to beat Vedanta Kalinga Lancers 4-3 in a high-scoring thriller for its first outright win in the Hockey India League (HIL) at the Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium here on Sunday.

In another contest, an attacking Tamil Nadu Dragons relied on Abharan Sudev and Thomas Sorsby's fourth quarter goals to defeat UP Rudras 2-0 and register its first win.

Lancers dominated initially with Enrique Gonzalez leading the raids. The Spaniard beautifully set up Thierry Brinkman, who beat Vanasch in the fifth minute.

Soorma drew parity as Jeremy Haywards' drag-flick brushed Krishan Pathak's pads before rolling in.

At the stroke of the first break, Sanjay executed a low flick to convert Lancers' third short corner.

Lancers came close to strike again but Vanasch blocked Nicholas Bandurak's attempt.

Krishan Pathak and Arthur van Doren blocked multiple attempts to keep Lancers ahead at half-time.

Soorma equalised again Nicolas della Torres converting a short corner.

Harmanpreet Singh scored off a penalty corner to put Soorma ahead, but Gursahibjit Singh levelled the scores.

Mutagar's goal restored the lead for Soorma.

Lancers earned two short corners and a penalty stroke but could not get past Vanasch.

The results: Soorma Hockey Club 4 (Jeremy Hayward 11, Nicolas della Torre 35, Harmanpreet Singh 50, Harish Somappa Mutagar 52) bt Vedanta Kalinga Lancers 3 (Thierry Brinkman 5, Sanjay 15, Gursahibjit Singh 51); Tamil Nadu Dragons 2 (Abharan Sudev 48, Thomas Sorsby 60) bt UP Rudras 0.

Pranav sizzles in Tamil Nadu's clinical win over Kerala

BASKETBALL

Sports Bureau

Pranav Prince top scored with 26 points as defending men's champion Tamil Nadu warmed up with a 75-41 victory over Kerala in the first league match of the 74th National basketball championship at the Sidsar Sports Complex in Bhavnagar on Sunday.

The Chief Minister of Gujarat, Bhupendra Patel, inaugurated the championship.

The results: **(league)**:
Men: **Group-A**: Delhi 88 (Prince Tyagi 24, Sunil 13, Ayush Sharma 11) bt Rajasthan 72 (Sharad Dhadhich 16, Mohammad Ishan 15, Ashish Trivedi 14, Piyush Meena 12).
Tamil Nadu 75 (Pranav Prince 26, Aravind Muthukumar 14) bt Kerala 41 (Sejin Mathew 17).
Group-B: Railways 65 (Sahaj Pratap Singh 19, Princepal Singh 13, Sahil Kalyan 12) bt Karnataka 52 (Sumanth Satyanarayan 10, Pratyanshu Tomar 10).
Women: **Group-A**: Delhi 67 (Namrata 36) bt Karnataka 63 (Mohana Bala 16, G. Chandana 14).
Railways 99 (Poonam Chaturvedi 18, Vaishnavi Yadav 16, Rashi Kotan 10) bt Madhya Pradesh 44 (G. Priya 12, P. Riya 11).
Group-B: Kerala 68 (V.J. Jayalakshmi 13, Susan Florentina 12, Irin John12) bt Uttar Pradesh 43.

Varun bags a grand double in air pistol

Kamesh Srinivasan
NEW DELHI

Varun Tomar twice stepped it up at the business end of the competition to bag the air pistol men's and junior section gold medals in the 67th National shooting championship at the Dr. Karni Singh Range on Sunday.

While the focus was on former world No. 1 Saurabh Chaudhary, after he topped qualification with a national record 591, Varun – who had missed Olympic selection narrowly for Paris – shot brilliantly to emerge as the champion in back-to-back finals.

Saurabh was not in the best form in the final and placed fifth following shots of 8.5 and 9.7. In contrast, Varun found the big shots in time to beat fellow Army shooter Pradhyumn Singh by 0.8 point for the men's gold. Aakash Bhardwaj from Rajasthan bagged the bronze ahead of Parmod.

Gagandeep, Mayank Chodhary and Ayush Jawla were the others to make the men's final.

In the junior final, Varun found himself trailing by 2.3 points behind Nikhil Saroha of Uttar Pradesh after 20 shots, but delivered four good shots at an average of 10.6 to win the gold by a three-point margin. Pradhyumn did well to get the bronze ahead of Mayank, Samrat Rana, Parmod, Himanshu and Mukesh Nelavalli.

In the youth final, Chirag Sharma won the gold 1.3 point ahead of Dev Pratap. The youth section had a total of 1514 shooters.

Mayank won the bronze ahead of Satvik Gupta, Shiva Narwal, Amit Sharma, Samrat and Mukesh Nelavalli.

The results: 10m air pistol:
Men: 1. Varun Tomar 238 (585); 2. Pradhyumn Singh 237.2 (583); 3. Aakash Bhardwaj 217.4 (583).
Juniors: 1. Varun 246.2 (585); 2. Nikhil Saroha 243.2 (580); 3. Pradhyumn 222.8 (583).
Youth: 1. Chirag Sharma 241.8 (579); 2. Dev Pratap 240.5 (582); 3. Mayank Choudhary 219.0 (583).
Sub-youth: 1. Mayank 583; 2. Dev 582; 3. Chirag 579.

Top three: Pradhyumn, champion Varun and Aakash, the men's air pistol medallists on Sunday. KAMESH SRINIVASAN